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**CASE STUDY EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF CAMPUS  
LEADERSHIP TEAMS ON PRINCIPAL RETENTION IN URBAN  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

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TEAMS ON PRINCIPAL RETENTION IN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**by**

**Felicia Sunella Adams**

**Treatise**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this to my supportive family. They have been a constant motivation throughout this journey. Thank you for the constant love and support during the entire process, which is a major contribution to making all of this possible.

To my husband Ray, I love you. Thank you for stepping up and taking care of our precious son when I had to attend class miles away. Filling in the gap of both parents showed me how committed you are to our family. You held the house together on the many nights I was in front of a laptop trying to complete assignments. Entering into the doctoral program was a leap of faith that could not have been accomplished without your love and support. All of your proofing and grammatical support helped me balance all of the demands of the principleship. I share this accomplishment with you. I am forever grateful for every moment that you sacrificed for my success.

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# **A Case Study Examining the Influence of Campus Leadership Teams on Principal Retention in Urban Middle Schools**

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There is a need to determine how CLTs influence principal retention in urban middle schools. Since 2009, half of beginning Texas public school principals remained on the job three years or less. According to the Texas Education Agency (2016), principals in low-socioeconomic schools are reportedly leaving more rapidly. Local policy in Texas urban school districts require Site Based Decision Making Committees to oversee the budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development at the campus level. According to the literature, the Campus Leadership Team is a proven way to implement the work of the Site Based Decision Making Committee. In doing so, an urban middle school principal has a systemic and sustainable approach to organize the roles and responsibilities of the principalship and avoid principal burnout. This study is a qualitative multiple site case study which will be used to determine how CLTs influence principal retention in urban middle schools. The researcher was able to draw comparisons of principals and their CLTs while predicting comparable results across the studies or contrasting outcomes in relation to one another and the Shared Leadership Framework. This research study not only serves to expand the literature, but also encourages superintendents to provide professional development on



best leadership practices to retain principals. Districts may use this study to gather data on principal perceptions and their use of CLTs aligned with SBDM. This is beneficial to save an urban school district time and money.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **Background**

For many years, the role of a campus principal has been to direct instructional programs, supervise operations and employees at the campus level and provide managerial oversight to ensure that employees and students were compliant with policies and procedures at the national, state and local levels. Overtime, however, the role of the principal has changed due to the rapidly growing pace of school accountability and the support that is needed to meet the demands of the job (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2012). With the strains on education, the weight the campus leader has to endure is too heavy for one to carry independently. Therefore, principals must depend on Campus Leadership Teams (CLT), which are collaborative teams that share a common vision (DuFour and Eaker, 1998).

The research shows that principal stability is related to school improvement, and it must take place on the campus (Fullan, 1991, 1993). Many school leaders are exploring ways to lead smarter, while using the talents of others at the school level. According to Fullan (2001), it takes five to seven years for a principal to impact change on a campus. When strong principals lead schools, they positively influence the culture and the instructional quality of the overall school system (Schools, 2014). “Leaders’ effects on students contributes to twenty-five percent of the total school influences of a child’s academic performance” (Schools, 2014, p.3).

In some urban districts in Texas, principals are only offered one to three-year contracts. These same principals are told they must make a campus exemplary in three years or else their contracts will not be renewed. This protocol contradicts the research, and makes the amount of time a principal is given to attain desired results nearly impossible (Fullan, 1991, 1993). The only way a principal can maximize the time given in one year is to transfer leadership to seven similar leaders to share the load by establishing a Campus Leadership Team. Grusky (1960), first

discovered such conflicts when he examined organizational structures that impact leadership. The number of changes in leadership will not make a difference, if district systems create barriers. In contrast, they will only force overwhelmed and burdened principals to seek other options.

The Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA] (2014), previously known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) mandates consequences to pressure principals to remediate educational deficits of disadvantaged children (US Department, 2017).

Despite the complexity of the principal job, according to a 2008 NAESP survey, less than two percent of principals prioritized continued learning amongst their job duties. Once principals move to their second or third year on the job, they are frequently left to lead and learn in isolation. (Protheroe, 2008, p. 8).

However, if CLTs are to influence the role of the principal, retain principals and shape characteristics of sustainable leaders, then principals are less likely to exit the profession.

### **Context of Site Based Decision Making**

In the twentieth century, schools were designed to provide a basic education in reading, writing and arithmetic (Joyce, Hersh & McKibbin, 1983). Children were trained for specific jobs such as: laborers, farmers, craftsman, or technical workers. Now, in the post-industrial era, schools are charged with delivering critical thinkers, transdisciplinary learners, productive citizens and global graduates. This shift has caused schools to restructure and make changes to budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization, and staff development. To make this dramatic transition, Site-based decision making (SBDM) was introduced (Harrison, Killion and Mitchell, 1989). SBDM brings the responsibility for decisions as close as possible to the school when the school staff works collaboratively to make decisions, which creates ownership

for those responsible for carrying out decisions when involved directly in the decision-making process. (Harrison, et.al, 1989, p. 55).

Texas adopted SBDM in July of 1991 by enacting House Bill 2885, which required each district to develop a plan for decision making to be filed with the Commissioner of Education. The Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) approved a longitudinal plan for campus decision making and model this approach from James. P. Comer, a leading psychiatrist. Comer (1993) published the Comer Process also known as the School Development Program and included a child-centered approach. This decision-making approach included a school community council, parent engagement component and student support team. There were similar legal requirements under Senate Bill 1 in 1990 with Amendments to House Bill 2885 in 1991. Finally, in 1992, the Texas Education Agency mandated SBDM for all Texas school districts. TEA defined SBDM as follows:

decision making is a process for decentralizing decisions to improve the educational outcomes at every school campus through a collaborative effort by which principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives assess educational outcomes of all students, determine goals and strategies, and ensure that strategies are implemented and adjusted to improve student achievement (TEA Resource Guide, 2010).

Based on the mandates from the state, local school boards created district level as well as campus level Site-Based Decision-Making Committees. The local policies define the participants and include requirements. For example, one urban school district in Texas requires the following: two-thirds of the committee must be classroom teachers, one-third of the committee must be school-based staff members, at least one number of non-instructional staff,



and must include at least one or more parents, community and business member(s). Local district policy states that campuses must have a Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) which is designed to establish, monitor, and evaluate goals for budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization, staffing patterns, and staff development. This model is aligned to state legislation and board policy. The intention of the SDMC is to pull together the community in a constructive, organized, and unified body to enhance the education of all students. SDMC representatives are elected by the faculty and parents are elected by the parent teacher association. It meets quarterly and as needed to discuss issues brought forth by the administration, staff, parents, or community. The Council is supported by standing committees that address budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization, staffing patterns, and staff development. Standing committees meet as needed. Parents are encouraged to serve on standing committees. Furthermore, the SDMC functions under the direction of the principal. Members of the SDMC attend SDMC meetings for the term of his/her office, monitor the implementation of the School Improvement Plan, address issues presented by the principal, present issues for discussion and recommend resolutions to the SDMC, create subcommittees by consensus of the SDMC, chair standing committees and subcommittees, submit minutes to the principal for committee meetings, and report the recommendations to the SDMC. The SDMC is responsible for approving all professional development plans for the school. The principal coordinates the process of shared decision making, facilitates communication for all stakeholders, considers issues and recommendations from the community, SDMC, and standing committees, and makes decisions based on those recommendations. Much like the campus SDMC in the urban school district, Campus Leadership Teams work in alignment with the principal and the requirements for Site Based Decision Making.

The atmosphere in the United States has become more demanding of public school systems, central administration. Often, the public asks the centralized decision-making unit to be broken into smaller, more workable groups that will provide opportunities to have input into local education decisions. To empower the local public-school system, a balance between freedom and accountability must be achieved. The school must have freedom to take ownership of the education process. (TEA Resource Guide, 2010, p. 2).

This atmosphere is in conjunction with how the principal interprets the demands of a principal's roles and responsibilities in urban middle schools. By utilizing a CLT to assist with the daily implementation of the SDMC's policies and recommendations, the principal is empowered and has the parallel freedom to be successful.

### **Problem Statement**

There is a need to determine how CLTs influence principal retention in urban middle schools. Since 2009, half of beginning Texas public school principals remained on the job three years or less. According to the Texas Education Agency (2016), principals in low-socioeconomic schools are reportedly leaving more rapidly. The cost to replace a principal is over seventy-five thousand dollars, and this does not include the principal salary (School, 2014). Principal pipeline costs include: preparing principals range from twenty-thousand dollars to one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars, hiring costs range from approximately six thousand dollars to twenty thousand dollars, signing bonuses may include up to twenty-five thousand dollars, internships cost up to eighty-five thousand dollars, mentoring turnover costs include eleven-thousand dollars to fifteen thousand dollars and continuing education costs eight-thousand dollars. For some districts, the price of turnover is entirely too much totaling over three-hundred thousand dollars (School, 2014). When expanding this problem from local districts to the nation,

the United States spent one-hundred and sixty-three million annually alone in affluent schools (Schools, 2014).

Additionally, school ratings show limited growth as standards increase and students move to high school less prepared academically. Because of the principal loss, students achieve less in both math and reading during the first year after leader turnover. Over time, the impact on student achievement cumulates negative effects on staff and students in underprivileged schools so much that the effects cannot be undone (Loeb et al., 2010). Lofty policies, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Every Student Succeed Act of 2014, are well-intentioned, but often unrealistic (US Department, 2017). Several school leaders are entering education as a secondary career without receiving the traditional college of education career pathways. Many educators land their first jobs looking for the support to be successful. The continued push for student achievement has challenged many public-school systems to evaluate programs and procedures that have long been in place. The requests for greater accountability around student achievement and financial constraints have forced school systems at the local level to examine how schools are organized (Trimble & Rottier, 1998). With student achievement declining in urban areas and principals exiting the profession, successful leaders have been known to utilize the team approach to move the needle in the field of education (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt 2015). Because of the reasons, the role of the head of school has shifted from a school being led solely by a principal to campus decisions being made using a specialized group of educators (Lambert, 2002). The critical issue that is not yet confirmed is how CLTs influence school leaders, and if it directly impacts principal retention.

## **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of Campus Leadership Teams in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework model. Additionally, do characteristics of successful CLTs alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention?

Since it is not known how the principal perceives change in relation to CLTs and to what extent CLTs demonstrate characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework, the study will benefit urban district superintendents who are responsible for principal hires. This research will also provide a shared leadership model for principals in urban middle schools, provide case studies to principals and superintendents to model effective and ineffective practices, and provide research to urban districts to preserve principals.

For urban principals in southeast Texas, the following research question will be used to guide the study:

- 1 Does the campus leadership team demonstrate characteristics of a selected research based leadership framework?
2. How does one perceive the principal role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams?
3. How and to what extent does the structure and process of a campus leadership team influence principal retention?

After answering these two questions, the researcher should be able to determine if CLTs influence principal retention.

## **Definition of Terms**

**Campus Improvement Plan** – The campus improvement plan serves as the blueprint for how your campus will address the needs identified during the campus needs assessment. An effective campus improvement plan can bring focus and coherence to reform activities and help ensure unity of purpose, alignment, and clear accountability (TEA, 2016).

**Campus Leadership Team** - Consists of key leaders responsible for development of faculty and staff, implementing and monitoring of the targeted improvement plan (i.e. SIP), monitoring student performance, and determining student interventions and support services (TEA, 2016).

**Every Student Succeeds Act** – Reauthorization of the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students (United States Department of Education, 2014).

**Leadership** – Involves working with teachers and other education professionals on systemic plans to improve educational programming and outcomes. In a traditional K-12 to school, leaders include: teachers, superintendents, principals, administrators, department chairs and specialist (Brundrett, M. & Hammersley, L., 2010).

**Principal Retention** – The act of the current principal remaining on the job.

**Shared Leadership** – Is the practice of governing a school by expanding the number of people involved in making important decisions related to the school’s organization, operation, and academics. In general, shared leadership entails the creation of leadership roles or decision-making opportunities for teachers, staff members, students, parents, and community members (Abbott, 2014).

**Site Based Decision Making** - Is a process for decentralizing decisions to improve the educational outcomes at every school campus through a collaborative effort by which principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives assess educational outcomes of all students, determine goals and strategies, and ensure that strategies are implemented and adjusted to improve student achievement (TEA Resource Guide, 2010).

**Urban Middle Schools** - Refers to schools in metropolitan communities that typically are diverse and characterized by large enrollments. These communities are often characterized by high rates of poverty (Urban Education, 2011).

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The purpose of the literature review is to describe the components of the Shared Leadership Framework in detail as well as provide supporting research to the influence of Campus Leadership Teams on principal retention. Through the exploration of a Shared Leadership Framework that outlines key elements that Lambert (2002) believes must be present to build an effective team and garner desired results. These elements include: team membership, leadership, character, collaborative communication and commitment. This chapter is structured as follows: The first section presents the elements of the framework. The second section of the literature review presents contributions and outcomes of effective campus leadership teams. The third section defines CLTs in Texas. Because the conceptual framework of the study provides the focus to understand CLT effectiveness in urban middle schools, the literature obtained is relevant to superintendents and principals. Finally, a discussion and conclusion link the research to the study.

### **Elements of the Framework - Team Members**

Members of the leadership team and the number of members may vary from campus to campus. The reason for the size of teams often has much to do with the size of the school, the certification of teachers, and “the existing attitudes and experiences of teachers” which is sure to influence team compositions (Rottier, 2002, p.17). Leadership teams may consist of assistant principals, instructional specialists, teacher leaders, counselors, content department leaders and teachers. The principal is the front-runner of the staff. Once the members are established, the group meets to strategize, solving problems, planning, coaching and supporting teachers, and decision-making in accordance with campus procedures and Board policy.

*Leadership and Teams: The Missing Piece of the Educational Reform Puzzle*, by Lyle Kirtman (2014), was used to drive the development of a team. The book focuses on the personal development of leaders and how each member's contributions is the key to a successful team. The framework permits leaders to reflect and address on their own individual profiles, which facilitates each leader's use of the concepts and practices outlined in Kirtman's competencies. Kirtman (2014) and Lambert (2002) understand when shared leadership is developed and implemented properly, shifts in educational results benefit students, teachers and principals.

**Seven competencies for developing a leadership team.** The first of the seven competencies are "Challenging the Status Quo," which focuses on high-performing characteristics that have a minimal focus on rule following and compliance. This does not mean that high-performing leaders break the rules. In contrast, high performing leaders take risks and challenge the status quo. According to Kirtman (2014), teams should start with a focus on the vision for success and the goals they want to achieve. The focus should be on motivating staff towards goals aligned to the improvement plan. This is where courageous leaders advocate for equity in instruction and resources, and push for the best for all students.

Another competency involves communication, expectations and trust, which focuses on the leader's ability to influence and motivate others through written and verbal messaging along with direct and honest dialogue. DuFour (1998) agrees with Kirtman (2014), noting that the trust piece is very important to leaders because they tend to build teams in their school and develop trust and confidence with their staff to achieve results. When you find leaders that are clear in this competency, they are clear about accountability for all staff and partners.

The third competency is "Creating a Commonly Owned Plan for Success," which is consistent with highly effective leaders. Teams focus on a written plan for success. The plan is



strongly led with an orderly focus on the school system without a lot of process in the development (Kirtman, 2014). Highly effective leaders can develop clear measures for success and monitor and report on the progress of all stakeholders.

The team-over-self mentality is the fourth competency, and this is where the leader hires the best people for the team. Hiring with patience is critical, and the leader must facilitate the process and provide guidance and support to vet candidates who understand the shared leadership framework and never settle for less. The leader is also committed to the on-going development of a high-performing team member. Exceptional leaders know they cannot obtain impressive results by themselves. According to Kirtman (2014), leaders are only as good as the strengths of the team around them. Leaders should be quick to give accolades to an exceptional team that gets results as well as address members who violate team norms.

Next, leaders should act with a timely sense of purpose. This trait is evident with high-performing leaders; moving and implementing a task quickly is a natural behavior for these types of leaders. Out of necessity, determination should be established among all team members, and Kirtman (2014) believes change should be sustainable by hiring the best people and building leadership at all levels in the school. Successful leaders utilize instructional data in the change process and create a sense of urgency among all team members to assure the group is goal focused and strategic.

The sixth competency, “Committing to Continuous Improvement to Self,” means always trying to improve and being interested in current ideas and practices. Leaders should be strong individuals who are innovative, collaborative and encapsulate an entrepreneurial spirit. Kirtman (2014) states that visionaries are vulnerable to criticism and search for authentic counsel on how to improve. The focus is not only on communicating to individuals regarding why they are not

successful, but also the focus is result oriented and improvements in student achievement and teacher development. Finally, expanding the network beyond the school environment is a skill set needed to excel the ability to engage people inside and outside in two-way partnerships can benefit the CLT greatly. According to Kirtman (2014), the toughest high-performing leaders tend to be extroverted and comfortable networking with a range of people in various forums. Building a network of individuals to support the school can help leaders in their roles. Before the work can begin, principals must select team members who challenge the status quo, build trust through communicate, develop a plan, believe in the team mentality, acknowledge that change must be urgent and sustainable, commit to ongoing professional self growth and join forces with various stakeholders to expand organizational capacity.

The seven competencies are used as the driving force in selecting team members. Campus leadership teams established at the school level with the right members will improve the systems and academic successes of the campus. Furthermore, the make-up of the leadership team and the number of members will align to institutional needs. Using this model, different combinations of campus leaders, which consists of assistant principals, instructional specialists, teachers, counselors and content departments can be established.

### **Elements of the Framework - Leadership**

Effective leaders are responsible for ensuring that teams throughout their organization are functioning effectively. Fairman & McLean (2011) found that the level of cohesiveness within organizations has a direct and powerful correlation with levels of productivity. Setting time aside to develop a cohesive team would be a productive way to improve performance. The team leader resides as the expert in leading the work that involves supporting teachers and bringing insight to data implications.

CLTs are established at the school level to assist the principal. The development of leaders requires a deliberate approach to building human capital development and team unity (Abbott & Bush, 2013). The range of expertise required in leadership highlights the importance of building strong leadership teams. The most successful head teachers share or distribute leadership responsibilities across their leadership teams. There are more roles within these teams such as: increasing number of non-teaching leaders, data analyzing, data presenters, designing teach support plans and systems monitoring (National College for School Leadership [NCSL] 2009). According to Abbott & Bush (2013), maintaining team effectiveness also requires collaborative practices, shared values and the availability of appropriate training and development opportunities. Developing leaders requires a deliberate approach designed to build individual capability and team unity within the school (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt, 2015). Districts tend to provide institutes that are tailored to meet the needs of the entire staff. Effective professional development for CLTs should be aligned to the school improvement plan and goals that lead to increased student achievement, teacher development and principal capacity. Brundrett & Hammersley (2010) point out: “high performing teams need to be nurtured” by a coach to “continually refresh through discussion and challenge” the staff (p. 64). The implication is that effective teamwork takes time to develop, and “quick fix” solutions led by inadequate managers are inappropriate and lack sustainability (p. 66). These practices must be in place to ensure that development is happening consistently. Once the team is developed, the student achievement goals outlined in the school improvement plan can be accomplished.

Schools that have high leadership capacity are those that amplify equity for all. The guiding paradigm is that the principal is only one voice in the school community (Lambert, 2005). Schools in which teachers are becoming significant trailblazers have structures in place

that provide opportunities for broad participation in study groups, vertical communities, and action research projects. According to Danielson (2006), there are three primary areas of school life in which teacher leaders can have a role: within departments, across schools and in their classrooms. As teachers hone their crafts, they are then leading the learning for students, which contributes to their academic successes. The variables determine the influence on student achievement (Searby and Shaddix, 2011). The evidence proved that the work of teachers as leaders was varied and highly dependent on the individual context of the school. Searby and Shaddix (2011) also discovered that training was necessary for teachers to learn an array of leadership skills while on the job. These skills include: the ability to build trust and develop rapport, diagnose organizational conditions, deal with learning processes, manage the work itself, and build skills and confidence in others. Many teachers are leading in the classroom without even knowing their capacities. The following areas are examples of teacher leadership: asking the right questions, setting the tone, maintaining energy levels of the classroom and anticipating student needs without being asked. Providing teachers with the necessary skills is the bridge from the classroom leadership to school leadership. Confidence and knowledge are two primary descriptors teachers use in explaining some of the benefits of their preparation in educational leadership (Richardson, 2003). Teachers were better prepared to face daily challenges, deliver instruction, remain open-minded and be a caring teacher to all their students. The main benefit was the improvement in teaching practices that transferred back to the classroom.

When the connection is made in the classroom, the improvement in student achievement occurs by implementing the best practices learned during the professional development. According to Richardson (2003), focusing on curriculum and effective teaching makes teachers

better and more valuable to their students. Teachers must utilize lifelong learning to be respected by their colleagues. If the principal does not permit the teacher to share beyond the four walls of his or her classroom, the only students impacted are the ones whose teachers attended the trainings. When the principal is supportive, the investment in teachers not only permeates the entire grade level, but also exposes the faculty so all students can benefit.

### **Elements of the Framework - Character**

Character is defined as the behavior of team members—including their moral values and programs (Lambert, 2002). Effective schools strive for better teamwork for their staff members. Greater collaboration among staff members is often seen to achieve campus goals (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The National College for Leadership of Schools [NCLS] (2009) focuses on inspiring leaders to improve students' lives identified by ten strong claims about successful school leadership teams.

1. Teacher leaders are perceived to be the main source of leadership by key school personnel (NCLS, 2009).
2. There are eight key dimensions of successful leadership that are centered on student learning, well-being and high expectations (NCLS, 2009).
  - a. Define the vision and set of values, which are heavily influenced by the actions of others.
  - b. Strong leaders identify the need to improve conditions in which the quality of the teachers can be maximized and students learning enhanced.
  - c. The leaders adjust organizational structures, redesign roles and distribute leadership in ways that promote greater staff engagement and ownership.

- d. Enhances teaching by providing a safe environment for teachers to try new models and alternative approaches that might be more effective.
  - e. Redesign and enrich the curriculum by deepening and extending student engagement.
  - f. Provide a rich variety of professional development and opportunities to enhance teacher quality.
  - g. Build relationships inside and outside the school community at all levels by making them feel valued and involved (NCLS, 2009).
3. Teacher leaders' values are key components in the success of a school (NCLS, 2009).
  4. Successful leaders use the same basic leadership practices, but there is no single model for achieving success (Leithwood & Sun, 2009).
  5. Differences in context affects the nature, direction and pace of leadership action.
  6. Leaders contribute to student learning and achievement through a combination and accumulation of strategies and action. In the research, Sammons et al (2011) shows that successful leaders contribute to improve pupil learning and achievement through a combination of strategies.
  7. There are three broad phases of leadership success: early (foundational), middle (development) and later (enrichment) phase. In challenging schools, greater attention and effort are put on the early phase to establish, maintain and sustain school-wide policies for improvement in all areas (NCLS, 2009).
  8. Leaders grow and secure success by layering leadership strategies and actions.
- According to Leithwood & Sun (2009), effective heads make judgments, according to their context, about the timing, selection, relevance, application and continuation of

strategies that create the right conditions for effective teaching, learning and pupil achievement within and across broad development phases.

9. Successful leaders distribute leadership progressively. There is a connection between the increased distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities and the improvement of pupil outcome. In the (Leithwood & Sun, 2009) review, researchers argued that school leadership has a greater influence on schools and the students when it is widely distributed. The distribution of leadership responsibility and power varies according from school to school, but this is always the obligation of the principal.
10. The successful distribution of leadership depends on the establishment of trust. Transparency is essential for the progressive and effective distribution of leadership (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

The research found that leaders in successful schools define success not only in terms of assessment results, but also in terms of personal and social outcomes, pupil and staff motivation, the quality of teaching and learning and the school contribution to the community (DCSF, 2009). There are certain characteristics that are connected to the high-performance levels that campuses obtain. Finally, the characteristics should be used to establish the appropriate team to provide support for urban middle schools.

### **Elements of the Framework - Collaborative Communication**

Team communication must be developed and remain as a dynamic means for group members to communicate with one another (Lambert, 2002). Effective leaders have a responsibility for influencing the quality of decisions throughout their organization. Researchers are only beginning to understand how teacher collaboration affects student achievement. There is some evidence that schools characterized by higher levels of collaboration also have higher

levels of student achievement (Goddard & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). The study, “Teacher Collaboration in Instructional Teams and Student Achievement,” describes that work and investigates how collaboration varies by school context and teacher characteristics.

When teachers engage in high-quality collaboration that they perceive as extensive and helpful, there is both an individual and collective benefit. High-quality collaboration among teachers is associated with increases in their students’ and school-wide achievement (Killion, 2015). The study is significant to understand more deeply how the nature and extent of collaboration, teacher characteristics and school characteristics interact to affect student achievement (Killion, 2015). The results of this research support the continuation of teacher collaboration that is focused, sustained and perceived as helpful as a productive approach to increasing student success and teacher performance. The connections between the study and this paper serves to explore if the results are transferrable to urban middle schools.

Leidner and Kayworth (2010) noted a common theme that has emerged in the perceptual difference between team members and their leaders. Effective leaders are highly involved with staff members, as opposed to being behind the scene micromanagers (Leidner and Kayworth, 2010). Leadership teams should receive constant feedback, guidance, suggestions and coaching in relation to ongoing campus issues. While traditional leadership is an art of charisma and multi-tasking, effective leadership must be kept simple with consistent communication, detailed instruction, rapid feedback and involvement of others who have a stake in the outcomes. Additionally, evidence suggests that the mentoring capability is reflected in the leader’s ability to build healthy social climates for team members to interact with each other (Leidner and Kayworth, 2010). In contrast, ineffective leaders have not transitioned from top down management to a shared leadership framework.



Effective communication within a school is essential to retaining and sustaining teachers (Aguilar, 2015). In schools with teacher longevity, the staff feels connected to one another. The faculty also feel like they belong to a group whose members are fulfilling a mission together. Public education needs a leadership structure, such as strong teams that cultivate emotional resilience (Aguilar, 2015). The research shows effective teams accomplish far more together than alone (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Therefore, teams should be built to inspire and challenge each other. Beneficially, an individual's strengths can be exploited, and the leader's weaknesses become a territory of focus.

According to Aguilar (2015), there are five characteristics of an effective school team. In the first characteristic, a good team knows why the team exists. All stakeholders are clear on their purpose and mission as communicated by the principal. Secondly, a good team creates a space for learning. Educators look for learning opportunities to enhance their practices such as collaborating with another effective teacher leader. Within an effective organization, learning happens in a safe context, where mistakes can be made, risks are taken, and leaders are comfortable asking every single question they want. Within a good team, there is also healthy debate. If learning is taking place and the thinking is provided by a team, there will be disagreement about ideas and constructive dialogue will exist. The fourth characteristic of an effective school team is that members trust each other. When there is trust within a dedicated team, equitable participation among members and shared decision-making occur. Finally, a good team has systems in place where communication allows for forming, storming, norming and performing (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). All the components are critical to ensure that there is intentionality and facilitation of communication that is essential for a high functioning team.

Leadership team members should view the culture of the campus as being collaborative and non-threatening. In doing so, the team members will feel like leaders and contributors who are dedicated to agree upon instructional goals. They will also see collaboration as a natural behavior when it comes to improving their instructional practice, due to clear goals and expectations outlined by the principal. In the shared leadership framework, the model implies that all communication must be collaborative in nature. The aim of this research is looking at campus leadership teams that are made up of individuals interacting together for the explicit goal of improving teachers' instructional practice, increasing student achievement and sharing principal burdens. Researchers are only beginning to understand how teacher collaboration affects student achievement. There is some evidence that schools characterized by higher levels of student achievement have collaborative practices in place (Goddard & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). A study conducted by Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt (2015) draws upon survey and administrative data of over nine thousand teachers in three-hundred and thirty-six Miami-Dade County public schools over two years to investigate the kinds of professional development that exist in instructional teams across the district and whether these developments are a predictor or supporter of increasing student achievement. The researchers found that teacher education quality differed widely across the district. Teachers and schools that engage in better quality professional development, have better achievement gains in math and reading (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt, 2015). Moreover, teachers improve at greater rates when they work in schools with better quality professional development. These results support policy efforts to improve student achievement by promoting teacher collaboration about instruction in teams (TEA, 2016). The study describes that work and investigates how it varies by school context and teacher characteristics. It also sheds light on how teacher collaboration contributes

to teacher improvement and student achievement (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt, 2015). The only way for schools to improve is by changing how teachers deliver and value instruction in the classroom. The quality of teacher collaboration with leadership teams positively influences teacher performance and student achievement (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt, 2015). Through the effective use of collaborative communication teachers feel a sense of support by the organization.

### **Elements of the Framework - Commitment**

Commitment exists when team members are committed toward organizational objectives (Lambert, 2002). Commitment comes from school-wide leadership where the traditional role shifts as both principals and teachers assume new responsibilities and learn innovative ways of working together (Bredeson, 1991). Teachers and principals work in organizational settings that encourage, and often prescribe, that they act in specific ways (Cuban, 1988). Shared leadership for school-wide initiatives is neither a natural phenomenon, nor is it created simply by forming a leadership team comprised of teachers and administrators (Clift, Holland, Johnson and Veal 1992). School-based management is not a fixed set of rules, but one must be obligated to the cause. This style is the opposite of prescription; in fact, it operates differently from one district, one school and one year to the next. The goal is to empower school staff by providing authority, flexibility and resources to solve the educational problems to their schools (DuFour & Eaker, 1989).

Researchers Clift, Holland, Johnson and Veal (1992) have documented support that campus leadership teams are an approach that many principals are taking to improve student performance and to reduce principal turnover. The demands on the educational system are forcing administrators to form teams of devoted individuals that transfer the load they carry to

shared stakeholders. According to Hogg (2014), transformative leaders have great support systems in place. Strong faculties allow leaders to make the right decisions, improve organizational culture and provide a more holistic view of the organization. If all stakeholders are committed with fidelity, the results will directly impact student achievement. Furthermore, the teams should be able to immediately meet the needs of a struggling teacher, and provide structured individualized support when needed. Finally, the number of teachers that leave the profession will decrease due to the overall commitment that has been established.

### **Contributions and Outcomes of Effective Campus Leadership Team**

The five elements of the Shared Leadership Model framework for instructional leadership may produce sustainable school improvement (Lambert, 2002). A school's academic achievement aims are established at the campus level, which are aligned to state and national standards. Educational leaders and teams make a difference in improving learning. The idea is not new or controversial, but the how is the question that researchers are looking to answer. According to the Wallace Foundation (2004), campus leadership not only matters, but also is the second only to teaching among school-related factors in the actual impact on student learning. The impact of leadership tends to be greatest in schools where the learning needs of students are most severe (Wallace, 2002).

Meeting school improvement goals alone is a challenging task for school leaders to try and accomplish alone. The complexity and the array of different leadership skills necessary to perform the leadership task cannot be achieved by a single individual. Principals have a tough time leading alone and school leadership teams are an essential component to the school improvement process (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008). School leadership teams provide elements of professional development aligned to the mission, vision, values and goals

(DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Campus leadership teams help to shape the nature of school conditions such as the structure, culture and classroom conditions (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). However, the team can help shape the teacher's instructional effectiveness in the classroom by using strengths of each member to coach the teacher.

Instead of micromanaging teachers, principals should lead efforts to collectively monitor student achievement through professional learning communities. The Every Student Succeeds Act cautioned educators to use scientific, research-based strategies to ensure that all students learn (2014). If principals want to improve student achievement in their schools, rather than focus on the individual inspection of teaching, they must focus on the collective analysis of evidence of student learning. DuFour and Motts (2013) noted that the most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning; however, is not by micromanaging instruction but by creating the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a professional learning community. Studies conducted by the Center on Organization and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (Carroll, Fulton, & Doerr, 2010); the (Wallace Foundation, 2004); (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010) and the American Educational Research Association (Holland, 2005) provide just a small sampling of the research base that confirms the positive effect of the collaborative process on both student and adult learning. However, in a professional learning community, campus leaders and teachers engage in a collective inquiry to decide on the work that will most benefit their students. They can start by forming groups in which members share responsibilities to help all students learn essential content and skills. By providing appropriate staff time to collaborate, helping to clarify the work that needs to be done and ensuring that teams have access to the resources and support they need to accomplish their objectives, the students are more likely to show academic growth.

The CLT process promotes shared leadership by empowering teams to make important decisions. Teachers have a voice in determining the content they will teach, how they will sequence the content, which instructional strategies they will use and how they will assess student learning. The administrator on the team drives the work to ensure the crew is focused on the right efforts. According to DuFour and Mattos (2013), student learning needs to be monitored in a timely manner. Every student is monitored through campus-wide processes using classroom performance and data from common and formative assessments as well as teacher and support staff input. CLTs compare data to determine which students need immediate support. Campus leadership teams are also responsible for creating systems of interventions to provide students with additional time and support for learning (DuFour and Mattos, 2013). Interventions are designed specifically to meet student needs based on data. Some students may need both academic and behavioral supports. Intervention plans may be designed to meet the needs of every student by categorizing students in one of the three tiers. Building teacher capacity to work as members of high performing leadership teams will focus efforts on improved learning for all students (DuFour and Mattos, 2013). Collaborative times are scheduled each month for instructional planning to ensure on-going communication and improvement. CLTs actively participate in all collaborative meetings, and hold one another accountable for the expectations set by the campus and team. For example, teacher and leader evaluations are aligned to meet instructional, planning and performance criteria. Every teacher should have an individual performance plan. The campus leadership team will then provide support to those teachers based on feedback from instructional practices, which are aligned to the tier of support. This results-driven environment leads to the retention of highly effective teachers and the dismissal of low-performing teachers. Everyone is expected to improve their performance in the classroom. School accountability schemes are used

to motivate higher levels of achievement for children from disadvantaged environments (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Furthermore, the professional learning community process has two powerful levers for changing adult behavior; they are unquestionable evidence of better results and positive peer pressure (Fullan, 2010).

### **Campus Leadership Teams in Texas**

According to the Texas Education Agency (2016), the campus leadership team (CLT) consist of key leaders responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the targeted improvement plan, monitoring student performance, and determining student interventions and support services. Consistently, teams meet for assisting the principal with shared decision making. The shared decision-making responsibilities of the CLT members are aligned with the SBDM (state requirements) and SDMC (local requirements) which include budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development.

**Budgeting.** The members on the CLT responsible for the campus budget may be the principal and assistant principals in charge of academic areas. These team members serve as liaisons to their respective departments, teams and organizations throughout the campus, assist with the creation and ongoing review of data analysis, needs assessment, and improvement planning processes and make recommendations to the committee and principal on the allotment of financial resources to support the school improvement plan (TEA, 2016, p.1).

**Staffing.** The members on the CLT responsible for staffing may be certified appraisers which act as liaisons to their respective departments, teams and organizations throughout the campus as well as identify problem areas and offer suggestions for improvement (TEA).

**Curriculum.** The members on the CLT responsible for curriculum may be administrators who have expertise in specific content areas and collect data to assist in the formative

assessments of the improvement plan, assist in the gathering and analysis of campus data and assessment of campus needs relating to the performance index(es) or system safeguard(s) causing the campus to be assigned accountability interventions (TEA).

**Planning.** All members on the CLT are responsible for planning and make recommendations for the improvement of specific components of improvement plan initiatives, refine improvement plan initiatives to improve implementation results, monitor and provide feedback to the improvement team on the implementation of the targeted improvement plan, and modify the detailed action plans for improvement plan implementation as required (TEA).

**School Organization.** All members on the CLT are guided by standards developed by a campus within context of state and district guidelines, make sure the campus organization structure is arranged functionally to encourage and facilitate shared team decision making and input, and verify that site-based decision making is established and working (TEA Resource Guide, 2010).

**Staff Development.** The members on the CLT responsible for Staff Development may be certified appraisers which consider all analyzed data and identified needs, lead development and implementation of the improvement plan, with the Primary Service Provider (PSP), intervention team and in conjunction with the campus principal, convey accurate initiative information back to their team and departments, etc., and serve as a conduit to bring ideas and concerns from their constituents back to the entire CLT (TEA).

Specifically, the role of the campus leadership team is to assist the building principal in planning, developing assessments, delivering staff development, supporting curriculum, modeling lessons and monitoring progress. Most importantly, CLTs are those who coach, develop and appraise teachers. As Hogg (2014) states, strong leaders have staunch support



teams to assist them, not yes people. These trailblazers use data to determine specific roles of the members of the campus leadership team. The data provides adequate information that determines the type of leadership support needed to support the principal.

Schools use various forums to meet and dialogue about student learning to ensure that the focus remains on the goals and student achievement. The three teams that are commonly used at the secondary levels are: campus leadership teams, departments and new teacher collaborations (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). First, CLTs meet to gain input and build capacity among all campus leaders. They also meet to provide feedback on classroom instruction and decisions that affect stakeholders. In a traditional setting, the principal would be required to perform this task alone. In a large secondary school, this may mean that a principal would have to evaluate up to one-hundred teachers. One hundred teachers multiplied by two-hundred required hours of observations and walkthroughs equates to almost forty work days. One can easily see how a principal leading in isolation can quickly become overwhelmed (Protheroe, 2008).

In summary, Hogg (2014) proves great leaders are only as strong as the support systems they create. As a result, campus leadership teams must be developed to retain principals. As an additional benefit, campus leadership teams will remain consistent and sustainable as the principal now shares the responsibilities of the principalship collectively. When principals are held accountable for high performing ratings and their performance is tied to the ratings, leaders should utilize best practices such as the CLT approach. However, one must ask are CLTs a one size fits all model?

### **Conceptual Framework**

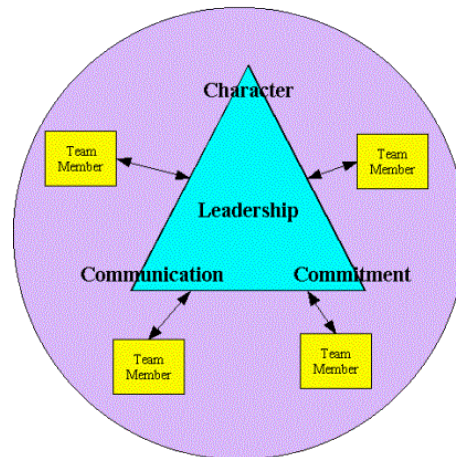
The conceptual framework used to study how campus leadership teams influence principal retention in urban middle schools will be the Shared Leadership Framework.

Conceptualization is taking abstract categories from data and identifying how the categories explain the phenomenon within a study (Creswell, 2013). For this treatise, Campus Leadership Teams will serve as the phenomenon while Lambert's (2002) Shared Leadership Framework model will provide the abstract categories.

Lambert (2002) documented that campus leadership teams are the novel approach that many principals are taking to improve student performance. In response to CLTs, Lambert (2002) developed a Shared Leadership Framework (Lambert, 2002). The first component of the Shared Leadership framework is "Team Members." The research looks closely at seven competencies used to drive the structure of a leadership teams (Lambert, 2002). Secondly, "Leadership" looks at governance and maintaining high performing teams. This research entails summaries of how campus leadership teams function and draw on the research that supports the impact of building leadership skills in teachers. Thirdly, "Character" comprises ten strong claims about school leadership teams. Fourthly, "Communication" uncovers research that encompasses collaboration and instructional practices. Next, the research asks what impact does commitment have on a school's leadership team and makes a connection between members, instructional practices and student achievement? Lambert (2002) further explores "Contributions and Outcomes of Effective Campus Leadership Teams" to explore if CLTs influence student learning. Therefore, this paper examines the effectiveness of CLTs and how they influence principal retention in urban middle schools.

A specific focus of the study is to understand campus leadership team effectiveness in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework. Lambert (2002) no longer believes that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators. DuFour and Eaker (1998) agree the

responsibilities of school leaders must be shared to lead a campus successfully. Figure 1 below shows the relationship components in the shared leadership framework, which identifies key elements that can impact the effectiveness of campus leadership teams.



**Figure 1. Team Model for Sharing Leadership Framework**

Lambert (2002) defined the following terms:

Character is defined as the behavior of team members—including their moral values and programs. The communication must be developed and remain as an effective means for team members to communicate with one another. Commitment exists when team members are committed toward organizational objectives. (Lambert, 2002).

These elements along with team members must be present and in the shared leadership model to produce desired outcomes. The team model for shared leadership will serve as the organizer for the study.

## **Discussion**

The literature review used the Shared Leadership Framework to examine the design and implementation of CLTs and the role the team plays in influencing student achievement and circumventing principal burnout. The literature provided adequate information that determined the type of leadership teams and support needed to improve teacher instructional practices and

increase student achievement. Specifically, this chapter examines the literature on structuring teams, leadership, key characteristics of a successful team, communicating through collaboration, being committed to the leadership goals and making successful connections with teachers and students.

The literature review in relation to the roles, leadership, and team effectiveness of campus leadership teams in K-12 schools supports the impact on student achievement. The research does not in detail articulate what is going on in schools outside of the leadership collaborative that could impact student achievement. Additional literature is needed to provide details of the work of the leadership team.

The immediate push for school systems to create students that will be able to contribute to society is the educational goal. The literature reviewed describes what should be happening, and investigates how leadership teams vary by school context and characteristics. Looking across analyses, results suggest that collaboration in instructional teams is associated with gains on both fronts (Goddard & Tschannen, 2007). Schools and teachers that have better quality training and support across instructional domains have higher achievement gains, which are usually at statistically significant and meaningful levels. Even so, the teachers' instructional practices are leading to achievement gains. Thus, there are several factors that can contribute to the gains or losses. In the literature, schools that have a structure in place, allow an opportunity for participation in various forms of professional development. Given that our measures for school and teacher performance are based upon student achievement gains, perhaps it is unsurprising that collaboration about student assessment is more often predictive than collaborative about other instructional practices. This may strengthen the case that observed relationships are indeed causal. Despite providing suggestive evidence that leadership teams can

improve teacher and school performance, the literature does not permit for casual conclusions to be drawn. Additionally, the experience of the leader is not taken into consideration, due to first-year school leadership being different from a second or third-year school leader. Further research will be necessary to see if the years of experience impact a leadership team's effectiveness. As a result, factors that contribute to the effectiveness of CLT may be missed. Although the studies provide convincing evidence that are carefully designed and well-resourced, an ongoing analysis of CLTs should occur to fit the needs of a changing campus. The literature did not address outside components that may also be beneficial to the teacher. Once the teacher is equipped to provide the appropriate instruction to the student, the attention is turned to the quality of student that is being produced.

## **Conclusion**

In looking at leadership team effectiveness at the middle school level in relation to the national educational policy, there are many school systems looking closely at the revisions of the policy (TEA, 2012). Assuming the findings reflect effects of organizational leaderships on teacher and school effectiveness, supporting teachers is a promising approach to educational improvement through increasing the quality of instruction delivered to the students in the classroom. Thus, the findings in the literature support the collaboration of teachers through CLTs are already common in school systems. Therefore, ensuring that the teachers implement the instructional practices are critical. When a breakdown occurs, the principal is overwhelmed, the teacher lacks resources and support, and the students suffer. The information found in the literature is not the first to suggest that collaboration among CLTs is a promising policy focus.

In summation, the mandates that are placed on schools from the accountability system will look to the viability of CLTs to determine student success in enhancing student

achievement. Principals in urban middle schools must demonstrate how their work in learning communities improves student learning and retains teachers, and the Shared Leadership Framework is a proven way to start. The literature clearly articulates that campus leadership teams need to realize that leadership in one form or another impacts principal sustainability, teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Although much of the research indicated that school leaders indirectly impact student achievement, leaders should align their leadership style or model that fits the schools needs and culture. If the components of the Shared Leadership Framework are cohesive, then teams will enhance student performance. School leadership teams that influence student achievement have shown that successful leaders exhibit certain characteristics along with a focus on commitment and communication. The literature review in relation to the influence of campus leadership teams connects to student outcomes. Once the connections are linked to growing teacher leaders, evidence shows how a campus leadership team proves successful.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and design for the study. Included are: the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, sampling method, data collection and analysis, and the strengths of the methods. The ethical and quality considerations provided the limitations, strategies to promote trustworthiness, positionality, ethical considerations, and the significance of the study. This study used a qualitative methodology with a case study design and a descriptive and interpretive approach. The sections that follow explain the rationale for the study characteristics and outline the specific procedures for data collection and analysis.

**Qualitative methodology.** The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Campus Leadership Teams in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework model. Additionally, do characteristics of successful CLTs alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention? For urban principals in southeast Texas, the following questions were answered through qualitative data processes:

1. Does the campus leadership team demonstrate characteristics of a selected research based leadership framework?
2. How does one perceive the principal role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams?
3. How and to what extent does the structure and process of a campus leadership team influence principal retention?

Qualitative data collecting processes allow for open-ended interview questions, interview data, document data, audio/visual data, text and image analysis and themes, patterns, and interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is designed to improve the quality of

practice of a discipline and is the most appropriate method to question the how and why of the influence of CLTs on principal retention more than the what (Merriam, 2009).

**Epistemology.** For the purpose of this study, the epistemological stance of constructivism was used. Crotty (2015) defined constructionism as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p.42). Within campus leadership team’s, constructionism claimed that meanings are constructed by human beings as they participate in the world they are interpreting. It is understood that meaning is not created, but constructed. DuFour and Eaker (1998) insisted campus leadership teams be purposeful in how the design conditions of the team collaboration. These settings were designed to assist leaders in accomplishing collective goals through effective collaboration. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2004) described constructivism as the “shift from the nature of learners as passive receivers of information to one in which learners are actively involved in making sense of their own meaning” (p. 189). DuFour and Eaker (1998), showed an interest in constructivist adult learning approaches that conveyed learning happens in a context of acting and where adults value engagement and experience as the most effective strategies for deep learning, with examination serving as the substance.

**Theoretical Perspective.** To draw conclusions about the influence of leadership teams on principal retention in urban middle school campuses in the school district, interpretivism served as the foundation for this study to construct meaning. Interpretivism, also known as interpretivist, involves researchers to interpret elements of the study, thus interpretivism integrates human interest into a study (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly, “interpretive researchers



assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (Myers, 2008, p.67).

According to the interpretivist perspective, research adds to the understanding of different context and situations (Crotty, 1998). The interpretivist approach looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social and practical experiences. The research looked closely at leadership teams’ social relationships and how their interactions impacted principal retention.

**Methodology.** This multiple site case study was used to understand the influence of CLTs on principal retention on urban middle schools. Case study research is an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as ongoing school based planning and decision making, leadership stability, or school improvement programs and interventions, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of these phenomena (Mertens, 2015). This methodology focuses on the concept of case, the example or instance from a class or group of events, issues, or programs, and how people interact with components of these phenomena (Moore, Lapan, & Quartaroli, 2012).

Because the study involved three campuses, the research design for this study was a multi-site descriptive and interpretive case study. “A multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases, and the goal is to replicate findings across cases” (Yin, 2003). The researcher could draw comparisons of principals and their CLTs while predicting comparable results across the studies or contrasting outcomes in relation to one another and the Shared Leadership Framework. Yin (2003) described how multiple case studies can be used to either, “(a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting

results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)” (p. 47). This type of design may be considered strong and dependable, but it may also be time consuming for researchers.

Stake (1995) concurred with Yin (2003) by referring to a multi-site case study as a collective case study when more than one case is being examined. The researcher recognized the appropriateness of the case study based on Stake’s following components:

1. the purpose of the inquiry into principals’ perceptions of CLTs and the characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework is to provide understanding;
2. the role of the researcher is personal, since the researcher is a principal; and,
3. the knowledge the researcher gains will be constructed rather than discovered.

Furthermore, this case study described what it is like for the researcher to be present, capture rich descriptions and interpret the circumstances (Stake, 1995). For a case study to be rigorous, Miles & Huberman (1994) required additional components such as the application of a conceptual framework. This addition supported the researcher’s introduction of the Shared Leadership Framework. Similarly, if a researcher wanted to study principals in urban middle schools across the United States, then a multiple case study would be an appropriate method to consider.

**Sampling Method.** In a multiple-site case study, a researcher must include more than one case to compare in and across settings. Three urban middle school leaders from successful campuses participated in this research study, along with one selected team member from each of the campuses. Successful schools were campuses that met standards according to the Texas Education Agency (2016) accountability rating system for three consecutive years and received at least four distinctions designation. The leadership years of experience of the principal and the team were included. Members had a minimum of one year of leadership team experience. Every

leadership team member appraised teachers and held a principal or mid-management certificate in the state of Texas.

The schools represented the urban district, and the areas were designated according to the district's boundary map. The geographical areas consisted of Southeast, Northwest, and a Central middle school in the school district. The campus leadership teams were communicated by the building principal to the researcher. The shared leadership framework was the conceptual model used to establish the appropriate CLTs for urban middle schools.

Leadership team members were chosen for participation based on campus organizational structures and experiences with the leadership teams. Each member of the teams included in the study were perceived as a leader on their campus and respected by colleagues; therefore, the assumption was made that each leadership team member served as a leader on their campus.

**Data Collection.** Multiple data sources were collected from three principals and one of their campus leadership team members. The study took place during a five-month period. The multiple site case study was used to fully understand the influence of campus leadership teams on principal retention in urban middle schools. As part of the case study design and data collection, each leader provided an organizational chart to document the structure, area of focus, and team members. The researcher collected team members' data including their responsibilities, current roles, and the duration of leadership team members' participation. The researcher looked at implications that impacted the teams' functionality. A review of interview results, observations, field notes, and archival documents were used as a data collection method.

Semi structured interviews were conducted one-on-one with school leaders to determine how teams were established. This allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions and to clarify issues that arose in reviewing documents and field notes from observations. Principals

also participated in interviews regarding the qualifications, knowledge, and skills in selecting leadership team members. The design of the leadership team in relation to the Shared Leadership Framework was also addressed in the interview.

Observations were conducted to evaluate participants working in and with leadership teams, and to determine the key characteristics of a successful campus leadership team. One thirty-minute observation was conducted at each urban middle school. During the observations, information was gathered on how team members support the principal and noting elements aligned to the Shared Leadership Framework were documented using field notes. The observation of the meetings was also recorded and corroborated with the field notes. Team meetings were observed to analyze the structure, agenda focus (instructional/non-instructional), defined roles, and interactions between the team members. The observation determined the contributors of the information and noted environmental factors.

Team structures were reviewed and analyzed to understand the alignment of support provided to the principal prior to the study, to determine if there were missing components of the Shared Leadership Framework and framed the context of the study. The differences in the designs were noted to determine if the structure influenced principal retention.

**Data Analysis.** Yin (2014) suggested that every investigation should have a general analytic strategy, to guide the decision regarding what will be analyzed and for what reason. The basic principal of case study analysis consists of making a detailed rich description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, the researcher sought to understand meaning as well as correlate the relationship between the data and the conceptual framework. After the researcher conducted the interviews, the recordings were transcribed by Rev.com verbatim. The transcription was placed into a word document double spaced and sorted into a graphic organizer

noting the key elements of the Shared Leadership Framework. Each element was assigned a number. The results were then coded according to the following: Team Members=1, Leadership=2, Character=3, Collaborative Communication=4 and Commitment=5. A sixth code will be assigned for principal perception=6. This analysis was replicated for each principal and team member interview. There was a total of six coding documents from the interviews. Within the space of each graphic organizer, the researcher noted emerging ideas and reactions that occurred. After the initial coding, the researcher organized the content by the specific elements and identifiably compared the elements from the campuses to the conceptual framework.

Additionally, the researcher simultaneously collected and analyzed data from observations and documents obtained from the principal, website and district. The observations were recorded and transcribed verbatim by Rev.com. The same coding process was used throughout the study, which produced a total of three coding documents. The researcher looked for relationships among the data, remained open to all possibilities, and reviewed those components to understand the context of the campus.

The final product of building theory from case studies may be concepts, a conceptual framework, or propositions or possibly mid-range theory. On the downside, the final product may be disappointing. The research may simply replicate prior theory, or there may be no clear patterns within the data (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.545).

In general, the analysis relied on the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. If theoretical propositions were not present, then the researcher considered developing a descriptive framework around which the case study was organized. Before this was considered, the researcher must not rely on first impressions, ignore conflicting information, and avoid hard to find information or become overwhelmed with the amount of data produced in the study.

**Strengths of Methods.** As a methodology, a multiple site case study has many strengths, particularly when utilized in the fields of study such as education and administration. These case studies have proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy. Since the research study was centered on campus leadership teams and how the team influenced principal perceptions of the Shared Leadership Framework and its influence on principal retention rates, a multiple site case study was more appropriate. It offered a means of investigating complex shared elements consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding campus leadership teams. The setting was attached to real-life situations, and the case study results were a rich and all-inclusive version of a phenomenon that offered perceptions and illuminated meanings that magnified the experience. A multiple site case study allows for investigation into a phenomenon across two or more settings, while the link between campus leadership teams behaviors and principal burnout is not fully understood (Yin, 2014).

Observations allowed the researcher to have a paramount experience with participants in the study, which allowed the researcher to record information as observed. Several characteristics are only noticeable when present and observed topics are usually difficult for individuals to discuss or explain (Creswell, 2009). On the other hand, interviews with principals and school leaders allow the researcher to attain information from experiences when information cannot be collected from an observation, are not conceivable. Creswell (2009) notes that participants can add further depth using probing question. The researcher could control the questions and aligned them directly with the goals and research.

**Limitations of Method.** The field of education has always focused on the campus principal as the sole leader of a campus. The stipulation that is being put on the principal is not

remaining at a steady pace, but rapidly changing daily in some school systems. CLTs will only have less than one academic year to influence principal retention. The multiple site case study only took place in three urban middle schools in one district. Principals at the middle schools represented only a small population of urban leaders in the state of Texas involved in the study. The researcher also considered other variables that influenced principals' perceptions and decisions to stay in their current roles. The experience of the leader was not taken into consideration, for first year school leadership looks differently than an experienced school leader. Further research will be necessary to see if the years of experience impact a campus leadership team's effectiveness. Other factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of campus leadership teams may be missed.

In summation, multiple case studies can be difficult for a researcher to navigate. Unlike most quantitative studies, a qualitative multiple site case study may involve very few participants to make the study manageable. The researcher assumed that the study could be replicated from one site to the next and the data is comparable. Likewise, the researcher assumed if data is contrasted, it is contrasted similarly across the setting. For a qualitative multiple site case study to be robust and valid, it is often very time consuming and expensive (Yin, 2003).

**Trustworthiness and Quality.** The strategies used to promote trustworthiness included verbatim interviews and transcriptions, rich description of data and observations from field notes. The utilization of multiple sources of evidence from the leadership team participants across campuses enhanced the validity of the study. Yin (2014) suggested using multiple sources of evidence as the way to ensure and construct validity. Furthermore, multiple sources of evidence and triangulation were used to collect data, interviews, observations, and reviewing documents. The specification of the unit of analysis also provided the internal validity as the theories were

developed and data collected and analyzed to test those theories. External validity is more difficult to attain in a single-case study. Yin (2014) provided the assertion that external validity could be achieved from conceptual relationships, and from these generalizations could be made.

**Positionality.** According to Baden and Major (2013), positionality replicates the position that the researcher has selected to adopt within a study in making a connection between the subject participants and researcher. Effective school leadership involves leading a group of leaders to support the leader leading the school. My position as a middle school principal provides me with a direct connection to a campus leadership team experience. The team is utilized to support the principal in meeting student achievement goals and supporting the day to day functions of running a comprehensive middle school. My experiences bias me towards the utilization of campus leadership teams.

In my collaboration with other principals, they tend to stress their frustration with all the demands that states and districts place on a campus administrator. Principals must be strategic in delegating duties to other leaders to remain effective. For this purpose, I must guard against bias as I conduct research to examine the influence of campus leadership teams on principal retention. Selected methodologies were used to guard against bias when interviewing leaders, observing teams, reviewing documents and making connections to the Shared Leadership Framework.

Additionally, I have trained and mentored principals on how to effectively design a campus leadership team and how to use them to improve student achievement. Through this opportunity, I have a contextual experience on how to develop an effective campus leadership team at the elementary and middle school level that other school leaders might not exhibit. My current school district utilized professional learning communities and provided an extensive amount of training to all school leaders. I was also selected as a trainer to model the process and



provide a real-life example to other school leaders. Furthermore, I have worked with struggling principals to provide support in designing a team that is most aligned to the needs of that campus. For this purpose, it is critical that I recognize my contextual knowledge while remaining open to understanding the context that the participants articulate and demonstrate their experiences. It is important for researchers to think about how they are positioned and the assumptions that they might hold, might influence the researcher related thinking and practices (Sikes, 2004). Although I have extensive knowledge of utilizing CLTs to improve student achievement, I do not have data to support whether CLTs influence principals' perceptions or provide enough support to alleviate principal burnout.

Lastly, this was a multiple site case study examining the influence on campus leadership teams on principal retention in urban middle schools. The study within itself will be valued as a unit that permits an in-depth examination. It was imperative to utilize a rich descriptive case study to generate details from the participants. The in-depth examination provided insight into team experiences. The data collected was unique to the campuses and was transcribed verbatim from interview responses and observational recordings. This alleviated potential biases as I only reported what I saw and heard, not what I felt and experienced emotionally.

**Ethical Considerations.** As principal, mentor, and principal trainer on campus leadership team implementation, it was important for me to acknowledge the potential for bias as outlined in the positionality section of this paper. With the noted experience, I have the potential to advise leaders as they express their obstacles as a campus leader and leadership team support. This behavior can skew the data if done in conjunction with the interview or observation. It was also critical to protect the identity of the principal and the campus leadership team members. This way, they answered questions authentically and honestly which made the study valid. In

the event any student names or faculty members were stated on the recordings, the names were redacted from the transcriptions to adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Lastly, the methodology was vetted through the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the appropriate protocol was followed to assure that confidentiality and concealment was present in the study.

**Significance.** This research study will not only serve to expand the literature, but also encourage superintendents to provide professional development on best leadership practices such as Campus Leadership Teams to retain principals. First and foremost, districts may use this study to gather data on principal perceptions and discover the length of time a principal will stay in his or her current role. This is beneficial to a superintendent due to the thousands of dollars it costs to replace a principal. Lastly, these findings will be useful to districts to help target areas for principal retention and validate effective principals that remain in their positions. Districts may use a successful principal and his or her campus leadership team as a model to replicate desired results.

For principals, this study will provide feedback to team members and the key roles they play in providing support to a principal. They will feel like leaders are contributors to students meeting their instructional goals. They will also see collaboration as a natural thing to do when it comes to improving their instructional practices. The goal of the team is to alleviate the burden on school leaders. From the campus leadership team, principals will feel supported. And in return, their performance will improve, and student achievement will increase. The leadership team approach will continue to cultivate as leaders begin to see the significant improvement in student performance. Campus leaders will be enlightened by the collaboration between campus leadership teams and how it influences the principal's responsibilities. If the team collaboration

is done with fidelity, the results will directly impact student achievement. Leaders will make connections between leadership support and how it will influence the principal retention.

The significance of the study will identify how teams should be able to immediately meet campus needs, which can prevent the principal from resigning as a public-school leader.

However, the number of principals that walk away from the profession due to enormous loads at the campus level, will decrease due to the leadership team support. In this era of education, for a principal to be successful as a school leader, it is going to require a team approach.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple site case study is to provide principals and superintendents with effective practices to retain principals. This research aimed to examine the effectiveness of Campus Leadership Teams in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework model. Additionally, the research will identify characteristics of successful CLTs to alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention.

Understanding how the principals perceive change in relation to CLTs and to what extent CLTs demonstrate characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework, this study may benefit urban district superintendents who are responsible for critical principal hires. This research could also provide a shared leadership model for principals in urban middle schools, offer case studies to principals and superintendents to model effective and ineffective practices, and provide evidence to urban districts to preserve principals.

This chapter provides an exhibition of the findings with details from three different data sources: interviews, observations and document review. The interview transcripts and observations will serve as the main sources of data collection. The study consisted of six participants serving on CLTs in three different urban middle schools in a Southeast Texas Urban School District. A qualitative perspective of this study provides rich and thick description of participants' experiences, which will allow the reader to better understand the participants' reality of their experiences.

### **Description of Participants**

A purposefully selected Southeast Texas Urban School District (STUSD) was the subject of the multiple site case study to determine if campus leadership teams influence principal retention. The schools used were assumed to be successful schools in the STUSD based on the

research criteria of Met Standards according to the Texas Education Agency (2016) accountability rating system for three consecutive years and received at least four designated distinctions. The leadership years of experience of the principal and the team were included. Members had a minimum of one year of leadership team experience. Every leadership team member appraised teachers using the district approved appraisal instrument and holds a current principal or mid-management certificate in the state of Texas.

The following sections provide a description of the schools' context to sufficiently frame the research sites. The background of the three schools used in the STUSD include: school location, demographic data, school programs, principal trends, the campus leadership team, instructional program and academic achievement results. After the background data is presented, rich descriptions of the interviews, observations and selected documents is detailed.

**Middle School A Background.** According to the historical documents, Middle School A opened its doors in 1926 to educate students in grades sixth through eighth. School A is located in the upper Kirby district, which is west of Houston's midtown neighborhood. The school enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 1,441 students. There are five elementary schools that feed into the middle school. Students zoned are automatically eligible to attend the school, and they are automatically able to attend the gifted and talented program if they qualify. Students who are identified as Gifted and Talented qualify for the magnet program, and then they are admitted through a lottery system. The 1,441 students represent a very diverse population: 36% White, 37% Hispanic, 12% African American, 15% Asian/Pacific Islander, 32% economically disadvantaged, 4% English Language Learners, 3.5% special education and 28% at-risk that averages an enrollment of 1,400 students (USD, 2017). The average attendance rate for the past three years is 97.3% with a dropout rate of 0%. School A offers school based

programs that support special education, advanced academics and multilingual student populations. Special education programs offered are Skills for Learning and Living (SLL), Structured Learning Center (SLC) and Standard Curriculum. The advanced academics programs are a Gifted and Talented Magnet, Pre-Advanced Placement courses and the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program. The multilingual program offered is English as a Second Language. School A has had three principals over the last ten years. Within a ten-year span, the principal longevity was two, five and three-year time spans. The campus leadership team consists of twelve team members holding the following positions: principal, six assistant principals, two instructional specialists (data & technology), magnet/International Baccalaureate coordinator and a counselor. Instructionally, the campus utilizes the International Baccalaureate standards and practices and the district curriculum aligned to state standards. The state accountability system ratings are based on four performance indices: Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness. For the 2015-2016 state accountability rating, the campus was rated as Met Standard. The campus met standards on all four of the indices. Campuses that received a rating of Met Standard are eligible for as many as seven distinction designations: Academic Achievement in English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, Academic Achievement in Mathematics, Academic Achievement in Science, Academic Achievement in Social Studies, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing the Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness (TEA, 2016). School A earned all seven distinction designations for three consecutive years.

**Middle School B Background.** According to the historical documents, Middle School B opened its doors in 2002 to educate students in grades sixth through eighth. School B is located on the west side of Houston, which is outside of Beltway 8 and south of Interstate 10 in the Briar

Forest area. The school enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 1,030 students. There are three elementary schools that feed into the middle school. Students zoned are automatically eligible to attend the school; students also have the option to be admitted through a boundary option transfer. The 1,030 students represent a very diverse population: 28% White, 37% Hispanic, 25% African American, 8% Asian, 2% Two or More Races, 50% economically disadvantaged, 11% English Language Learners, 7% special education and 44% at-risk that averages an enrollment of 1,000 students (USD, 2017). The average attendance rate for the past three years is 96.6% with a dropout rate of 0.2%. School B offers school based programs that support special education, advanced academics and multilingual student populations. Special education programs offered are Behavior Support Class (BSC), Preparing Students for Independence (PSI), Skills for Learning and Living (SLL), Structured Learning Center (SLC) and an Alternate Curriculum. The advanced academics programs are a Vanguard Neighborhood and Pre-Advanced Placement courses. The multilingual program offered is English as a Second Language. School B has had three principals over the last ten years. Within a ten year span the principal longevity was four, two and four-year time spans. The campus leadership team consists of seven team members holding the following positions such as the principal and six assistant principals. Instructionally, the campus utilizes the district curriculum aligned to the state standards. The state accountability system ratings are based on four performance indices: Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness. For the 2015-2016 state accountability rating the campus was rated as Met Standard. The campus met standards on all four of the indices. Campuses that received a rating of Met Standard are eligible for as many as seven distinction designations: Academic Achievement in English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, Academic Achievement in Mathematics, Academic

Achievement in Science, Academic Achievement in Social Studies, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing the Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness (TEA, 2016). School A earned six distinction designations in English Language Arts/Reading, Social Studies, Science, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness for two consecutive years.

**Middle School C Background.** According to the historical documents, Middle School C opened its doors in 2002 to educate students in grades sixth through eighth. School C is located in Bellaire, Texas, which is near the intersection of the 610 Loop and U.S. Route 59. The school enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 1,240 students. School C was built to relieve nearby middle schools and accepts students by application only. Anyone living in the STUSD may apply for the Foreign Language magnet program and the students that are zoned to three surrounding middle schools may apply to attend the regular program. There are no zoned students that are automatically eligible to attend the school. Magnet students are admitted through a lottery system. The 1,240 students represent a very diverse population: 44% White, 32% Hispanic, 8% African American, 13% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Two or More, 27% economically disadvantaged, 5% English Language Learners, 5% special education and 18% at-risk that averages an enrollment of 1,200 students (USD, 2017). The average attendance rate for the past three years is 97.5% with a dropout rate of 0%. School C offers school based programs that support special education, advanced academics and multilingual student populations. Special education programs offered are Skills for Learning and Living (SLL), Structured Learning Center (SLC) and Alternate Curriculum. The advanced academics programs are a Vanguard Neighborhood, Pre-Advanced Placement courses and magnet Foreign Languages. The multilingual program offered is English as a Second Language. School C has had three



principals over the last ten years. Within a ten year span the principal longevity was eight, four and two-year time spans. The campus leadership team consists of team members holding the following positions: the principal, three assistant principals, business manager and magnet/Foreign Language coordinator. Instructionally, the campus utilizes the district curriculum aligned to the stated standards. The state accountability system ratings are based on four performance indices: Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness. For the 2015-2016 state accountability rating the campus was rated as Met Standard. The campus met standards on all four of the indices. Campuses that received a rating of Met Standard are eligible for as many as seven distinction designations: Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading, Academic Achievement in Mathematics, Academic Achievement in Science, Academic Achievement in Social Studies, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing the Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness (TEA, 2016). School C earned six distinction designations: English Language Arts/Reading, Social Studies, Science, Top 25% Student Progress, Top 25% Closing Performance Gaps and Postsecondary Readiness for three consecutive years.

### **Coding**

Themes were developed with a direct relation to components of the Shared Leadership Framework to understand meaning. The key elements that can impact the effectiveness of campus leadership teams were themes that emerged during the coding process when the interviews were transcribed. The results were coded according to the following: Team Members=1, Leadership=2, Character=3, Collaborative Communication=4 and Commitment=5. A sixth code (6) was used for principal perception. Emerging ideas and reactions were noted. Observations and documents were analyzed in the coding process.

## **Administrative Interview Protocol**

The Administrative Interview Protocol was administered to principals in Schools A, B and C as well as one campus leadership team member from each campus for a total of six interviews. The interviews varied in length and time based on the participants' responses. The researcher followed the format of the protocol, and all participants responded to each question. Interview questions for campus leadership team members are noted in Appendix A. All three principals served in the principal role for the 2016-2017 school year, and each CLT member served on the leadership team during the same school year. Although the years of experience ranged in years of middle school leadership from two to four years with all three identifying themselves as female (one participant was African American, and two participants were Caucasian), all three principals met the criteria of having completed at least one year as principal at the selected site. The principals were interviewed by the researcher on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> of 2017 on their campuses. After the principal was interviewed, the school principal selected a CLT member to be interviewed. The years of experience of the CLT members ranged in years of middle school leadership from three to four years with two members identifying themselves as male (one Hispanic and one Caucasian) and one member identifying as female (Caucasian), all three members met the criteria of having completed at least one year as a CLT member at the selected site. The following sections detailed the data collected from the principal and CLT members' interviews.

**Middle School A Principal's Response.** Principal A has been in public education for sixteen years. She has served as the principal of the middle school for the past three years. During the interview, she stated that her role was to guide the leadership team as the instructional

leader of the campus. Her major responsibilities and duties include: focusing on managing the staff as well as leading and guiding the leadership team. She stated,

I think a huge piece of my role is dealing with the campus budget and making sure the staff's needs are met. Budgeting and staffing are key components that should be the focus of the leader on the campus.

***Section 1- Team Members.*** Principal A recognized that once she accepted the role as principal, she became the leader of the Campus Leadership Team. Out of twelve members of the CLT at Middle School A, she hired eleven members and inherited one member. After specific training on Campus Leadership Teams, she identified the roles that were needed for the campus. She then matched skill sets of applicants with the needs of the campus. The members were identified centered on specific support pieces that teachers needed to be successful, and she looked at data to determine focus areas and campus needs. As she selected each member as part of the team, she then included that team member in the selection process of other team members. To introduce members of the team to one another and the staff, the timing of the hire was critical. If a member joined at the beginning of the year, he or she was introduced to the department of the specific grade level, various campus leaders and eventually the faculty and community. If the person joined in the middle of the year, the member was introduced more informally than the beginning member, yet as quickly as possible to the same groups. Principal A continued to describe her participation in the CLT as a facilitator who provided resources to the team. These resources included, but were not limited to: qualitative observations and anecdotal notes of teachers, classroom visits, conversations as well as quantitative data such as attendance rates, passing rates, graduation rates, and test scores. She mentioned that the CLT's work and focus shifted constructed on the changing data that she discovered. She stated that the work of the

CLT must align with the overall vision of the School Improvement Plan and the work led by the Shared Decision-Making Committee, and her job was to make sure that all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. She reiterated her biggest responsibility was monitoring the work and aligning the work and resources needed with the campus budget. The principal shared that including instructional coordinators as part of the team such as the counselor, technologist, IB coordinator and data specialist were a vital part to the membership of the CLT.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** In Section Two of the Administrator Interview Protocol, Principal A responded to Leadership Questions. Principal A defined leadership as

When you have a group of members that are following your lead in the direction you're trying to move the organization or group. Basically, I am real big on you are not leading, if no one is following you. You must have people who work with you and believe in what you believe in for the greater good of the organization.

She further explained that the campus team must form as a cohesive unit, and individuals must work in formation. At Middle School A, there are some members who have a specific task that does not require them to work with a team member, but the individual reports back to the team. As the leader, Principal A shared that she does not micromanage the members. They know their responsibilities, and she sets them free to accomplish the objectives under their assignments. The development of team members is described by Principal A as the following:

I am always looking for ways to grow as a leader and in the business of education, and the learning never stops. The leader must seek out ways in which to develop oneself to be an effective facilitator of the team.

Leadership duties are distributed equitably as much as possible in School A; however, Principal A stated,

Every single team member has specific duties, but each member does not have a grade level or specific content area. You must look at the level of experience and maturity of each team member. You want to give people what they can handle, so you don't overwhelm them and burn them out of the role. Everyone's cup is not the same size, but you certainly need to fill each cup to his or her capacity. Then, you want to watch them grow. If they become stagnant or not capable of filling the cup, then the leader must address and provide support.

To maximize all resources, team members are cross-trained, so the leadership at the campus is transferrable and sustainable. There are systems in place where the team members have opportunities to lead other areas outside of their traditional daily duties. If a CLT member leaves, another member can step right in his or her place.

***Section 3- Character.*** From the perspective of the principal, the vision at Middle School A is for the CLT to know that they are there for all students, and they need to make sure that the needs of every single student on the campus are met. She stated, "We can't just focus on specific students; we must focus on all." The team is adamant about meeting the needs of all so much that there are elective classes to serve students at various levels. One core belief that is non-negotiable is valuing students and treating every student regardless of race or gender. Leaders have the autonomy to adjust when necessary to engage teachers who are assigned to their cohorts. While they don't have to do every activity the same, they must accomplish buy-in from the teachers. For example, the CLT member models lessons and shares information, and department heads must adapt to a trainer of trainer model to share within their specific subject areas. Trust is another character trait that is vital to the CLT. The CLT at School A trusts one another to keep confidential information shared during meetings private. When Principal A was

asked for evidence regarding the presence of trust, she stated she has never had to redirect a CLT member for dishonesty, and CLT members confide in each other in her presence.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** Principal A stated that collaboration is a key piece with her leadership team. Within the structure of CLTs, departments are assigned under a CLT member. The CLT meets once a week for Principal A to guide the work. The CLT member then takes the information or assigned tasks from the weekly meeting, and meets with the content departments and grade level clusters, one core teacher from all subject areas, once a month. After the monthly meeting, the CLT member conducts observations and walkthroughs to gather evidence of student learning. The meetings are scheduled for eighty-five minutes, and planning clusters meet bi-weekly to communicate student progress or lack thereof and collaboratively create intervention plans. In these meetings, communication is very open and guided by campus norms such as: honor time, be present and prepared and outcome driven. There is also a system for feedback in School A. Every single agenda has a section on the back that allows for feedback. Once filled out completely, the agenda is returned to the administrator over that department. The administrator brings the feedback to the weekly CLT meeting, and there is time allotted on the agenda to share with the other members.

***Section 5- Commitment.*** Lastly, Principal A responded to the commitment portion of the Administrator Interview Protocol. Principal A revealed her commitment to the campus and CLT by outlining her hands-on approach to budget planning and all the areas outlined on School A's CLT agenda. Principal A described herself as fully vested in the process and the team, and she did not delegate these responsibilities to other team members. In relationship to the campus Shared Decision-Making Committee, she shared that there is a member from the CLT who represents the CLT at SDMC meetings alongside her each month. The staff development plan is

crafted during the summer, and the leadership team plays a role in the professional development each school year. At School A, “members must be committed to the work year-round, because all members participate in the planning, development and implementation of the staff development.” Additional summer work completed includes: interviewing and selecting staff, scheduling students into classes, curriculum alignment and developing the assessment calendar. Principal A stated she had been committed to the CLT for three years which is if she had been the principal. She concluded the interview by sharing that members of a CLT have huge responsibilities outside of their traditional job descriptions. It takes every member of the team working together to accomplish the campus goals. This way, the principal can really focus on his/her assigned duties. When CLTs function effectively, Principal A says that principals should feel supported. She strongly felt that support by a CLT is vital to a principal’s longevity and success.

**Middle School A Campus Leadership Team Member Response.** CLT Member A has been in public education for eleven years. She served as an assistant principal of the middle school for the past three years. During the interview, she stated that her role was to serve as the eighth-grade administrator, make schedules, plan eighth grade events and make sure those events were successful. Her other duties as assigned are: oversee the math department for grades six, seven and eight, and ensure all students achieve at least one-year growth academically and emotionally. She shared, “I make sure I care for the whole child, which is our mission at Middle School A.”

**Section 1- Team Members.** CLT Member A was selected for the Assistant Principal position through an interview process. She first interviewed with a panel, and then she was

selected by the team. Her responses and descriptions of the process validated Principal A. She stated,

We were all selected based on the shared vision of the principal. She chose instructional folks who were strong in a specific content area. Since we have a lot going on, she wanted to make sure we were well versed in the areas that matched the needs of the campus. For me, my area is math, and I know I was specifically chosen for that reason. First, CLT Member A was introduced to the school community at a faculty meeting. Then, the principal escorted her around the campus introducing her to staff, teachers and students. The principal attended the first math department meeting with the CLT Member group, and then set her free to accomplish her assignments independently. She described taking on the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team, filling in the gaps where she is needed, and collaborating with other CLT Members to reach a common goal. She described the diverse group as: two men, five women, four Caucasian members, one Hispanic member, one Asian-Indian Member, one African American member, one principal, five assistant principals, one Dean of Instruction, one Magnet Coordinator, one International Baccalaureate Coordinator, and one Data Manager. She stressed that each person had their own vital piece of the school, and they were well covered.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** In Section Two of the Administrator Interview Protocol, the CLT member A responded to Leadership Questions. CLT Member A defined successful leadership as Having a goal or vision for the school, and then finding a way to carry out that vision. You must make sure you have a clear path, know where you are trying to go, and make sure that everyone on the team is on the same page.

She further explained that every time she participates in a meeting with her team and the teachers she tried to reflect on the overall goals of the campus. She asks, “Where we are right now in



relation to the goals, and if we are not there yet, what do we need to change to get there?” Since everyone knows the end goal, they work very closely together. For example, the math teachers’ work as a department on curriculum and assessments, yet the sixth-grade math teacher will partner with other sixth grade teachers for specific activities for their grade level. She explains the crossover that occurs when working with various campus leadership teams. In those same meetings, teachers are given an opportunity for input. If they have a problem that needs to be solved, everyone can come together to help to do what is best for the students. As far as the leadership team, it is very similar. Even when they work in isolation, they spend a lot of time collaborating by bouncing ideas off one another. In the weekly meetings, the goals drive the work, and relationships occur naturally. CLT Member A describes a very safe campus environment where there is a sense of respect across the campus. She expounded,

We work on what our strengths and weaknesses, and we do what we can to contribute. In that regard, I feel that the responsibilities are equitable. Whatever my principal throws at me, I am willing to take on...When we have a goal; I will share my ideas. They are perceived either as that’s a promising idea, or we come together and tweak ideas to work out a solution. Everybody knows what they need to do, and we are all empowered.

CLT Member A also felt the team could still function, if the principal left. The principal doesn’t have to do everything on her own as they are well trained to step in when needed.

***Section 3- Character.*** From the perspective of the CLT Member A, the vision at Middle School A is for the CLT to look at student success and make sure all kids have a great learning environment where they can grow and have a sense of safety and belonging. Everyone here has a place where they can come and be involved. The school atmosphere supports students who are well rounded in academics and extracurricular activities. The CLT is constantly evolving as

the needs of the students and staff change; however, CLT Member A reiterates that they are an effective leadership team. According to her, characteristics of a good team member include flexibility, selflessness, trustworthy, reflective, communicating and growing in the leadership role. She feels effective knowing that she can talk about anything, and it will not get out to the campus. They also share similar personality traits that allow them to foster their friendships outside of work, and they support each other as a family.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** CLT Member A stated that an example of collaboration is working on the master schedule. For example, seventh and eighth graders share a lot of classes and teachers, and she must communicate with the seventh-grade assistant principal to make sure they do not overcrowd classes. All assistant principals must communicate with the special education and section 504 specialists to make sure the schedule is compliant with local, state, and federal policies. The communication system takes on various forms such as: monthly meetings, face to face conversations, written form, and phone calls. The feedback system involves building relationships; teachers have multiple administrators they can go to for support, and the CLT Member felt the team all sent the same message. She shared,

The teachers are comfortable to come to us and vice versa. When I give feedback or have a question, they are open to my feedback. We email and text with teachers to build relationships, so the teachers feel we are accessible. We can go to them, and they can come to us.

***Section 5- Commitment.*** Lastly, CLT Member A responded to the commitment portion of the Administrator Interview Protocol. CLT Member A stated all team members work on budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development; they can share with the principal who needs what and to what extent. They participate in the interviews,

schedule model lessons, and she lets them give input into hires for their respective departments. Additionally, they work with teachers to tweak curriculum from the district, and plan the master calendar of events.

Team members participate in the CLT by engaging in different pieces. They listen to the Parent Teacher Organization along with the Shared Decision-Making Committee, and all school stakeholders have input. After three years, Member A felt the CLT role is vital to reducing team member and principal turnover. She concluded,

Through this distributive leadership practice, I now have a model I can use when I become a principal. This school would not be successful without it. It is easy to commit to the school when there are systems in place that align with our common vision. This comes from the principal leadership. Not only are we committed to the school, but we are personally committed to our principal. I am willing to do whatever she needs, and these roles are embraced to support her.

**Middle School B Principal's Response.** Principal B has been in public education for ten years. She was selected through the district interview process, and she has served as the principal of the middle school for the past four years. During the interview, she stated that her role has changed since she initially took on the principalship. At first, she said she was the person who needed to set the tone, expectations and culture of the campus and create systems. She shared, "The focus now is coaching and developing the deans, which are the assistant principals." Her major responsibilities and duties include: refining systems, coaching and developing teachers and pushing deans to focus on student progress and student achievement. She felt that the leadership team role has transitioned from roles not being aligned instructionally

to focusing more on instructional support and student support. Principal B noted that her role was to be the visionary on campus to assure that everything remains aligned. She shared,

It is critical that we create an environment where teachers can grow and develop. The demands from central office are assigned to the leadership team. Items are delegated based on the strength of the team, and parent concerns are handled by the dean over a grade level. There is a process in place that allows issues to funnel through the deans first. This system leaves me available to deal with issues that require a principal decision.

***Section 1- Team Members.*** Principal B recognized that she needed individuals on her team that were instructional leaders that knows what good instruction looks like. She vetted people who could talk about instruction and were willing to coach and develop teachers in a way that aligned with campus expectations. The roles were established based on the team content background and strengths that could support the campus instructionally. Principal B stated, “Teachers buy in more when someone is coaching that demonstrates content experience and familiarity with the subject matter.” To introduce members of the team to the school community, they were included in the welcome back at the beginning of the school year. They also led the department meeting they facilitated during the Back to School professional development. All CLT Members established campus norms at the beginning of the year, and remained consistent throughout the year. Principal B continued to describe her role on the CLT as making sure that everything she assigned to the deans connected to instructional leadership. She assured the researcher that expectations were implemented with fidelity. She also made sure she coached them, so CLT members had the opportunity to grow and develop. Being the instructional leader on campus, she participated and provided them with feedback to support

their development. She reiterated her biggest responsibility was coaching and developing the leadership team which included six deans of instruction, which were the vital contenders to move the campus forward instructionally.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** In Section Two of the Administrator Interview Protocol, Principal B responded to Leadership Questions. Principal B defined leadership as “establishing goals and vision where individuals embark upon a journey with you.” Her leadership definition matched her practice due to the vision and expectations she set for the team. She further explained that the campus team was a cohesive team that worked closely together. However, there was one team member that had been on the team who isolated herself when the principal was hired. Principal B shared the member did not buy into the vision and own the work. To address this issue, she met with the leadership team members individually to discuss their strengths and weaknesses; they developed a plan of action for their own leadership professional development from the beginning. She walked classrooms with the deans and calibrated on what was observed and how feedback would be given to the teacher. She noted how the action steps and feedback aligned to campus expectations throughout her examples. She also observed the deans leading campus teams within their departments. The development of participants was done through live examples and observations that occurred daily, which turned into teachable moments for leaders. CLT Members that were interested in moving into the principalship were given opportunities to receive additional coaching. Leadership duties were distributed as follows: everyone appraised between eleven to twenty teachers, acted as an instructional coach, and adhered to additional duties as assigned. Principal B felt it was good for them to learn something new on top of everything else. She stated,

They are the people that are pushing my systems with expectations and making sure my vision is fulfilled. They are my eyes and ears on campus, and they give me feedback.

They are all in charge of student discipline and meet with parents, emergency procedures, social-emotional learning, day to day campus operations, but most of our focus must be on instructional leadership.

Even though their days ran smoothly, there are specific duties that the principal held close to her. She recommends people for termination, because if someone disagrees and grieves it she must answer to the district. She involved the CLT Members by participating in the process, but they knew they were just making recommendations. Additionally, she holds onto the budget responsibility, but she does involve the budget manager as a check and balance for her decision making. Since staffing and budget came with high principal accountability, she owned those decisions. To conclude her thoughts on leadership, Principal B shared,

I wouldn't pin myself down to one style of leadership. I just follow best practices. The roles are evenly distributed and clearly defined. Everyone is cross trained, and they all could step into my role on any given day. Hiring the right folks from the start allows us to work closely like a well-oiled machine.

***Section 3- Character.*** From the perspective of the principal, the vision at Middle School B is to make sure every single kid gets a quality education. Targeting groups of kids and being very transparent about what they do was key to their success. She shared there were past practices where certain groups of kids were not getting what they needed. This goal became the mission of the CLT. Every participant's character had to demonstrate: giving opportunities to all, adjusting within departments so kids had more access to certain classes and programs and making sure their roles were impactful enough to receive buy in from their assigned departments.

Additionally, the principal structured organizational teams within departments where at least two deans supported a staff member. For example, a seventh-grade math teacher would have a grade level and content administrator available to support him or her. This way, CLT Members could not only support one another, but also show consistency of the CLT. Other characteristics that were vital to the team were: a good communicator, loyalty, trustworthy, a willingness to grow and develop, and follow policy. Principal B responded,

They knew my vision when I hired them, so if they disagree with something then we must talk about it. Loyalty is very big along with the alignment of the leadership team.

If teachers perceive the deans and principal aren't in alignment, then the CLT loses credibility. If this happens, it takes a long time for the CLT to gain the trust of the faculty.

This halts the instructional progress of the school, and may cause a major setback to the progression of a school.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** Principal B stated that the CLT develops their August professional development based on data obtained from an end of year teacher survey. The team asked teachers what they needed to do to train the teachers. After the members disaggregated the results, they worked together to figure out which sessions they were going to offer and lead. Other forms of collaborative communication included: grade level teams planned and designed all the professional development, developed support plans for teachers, and they worked out their own scheduled conflicts when it came to after school duties. Since the principal prefers face to face dialogue, she did not send a lot of texts or emails. The team met every Friday to establish weekly communication. When necessary, she called them on the phone, or she asked them to stop by her office. To collaborate with the Site Based Decision Making Committee, two CLT Members represented the leadership team. They gathered feedback from the parent

representatives, and took the information back to the CLT weekly meetings. They also communicated safety issues and served as an informative role for the parents. When the principal observes teachers and CLT members, she modeled the communication in the form of coaching.

If there is an opportunity for feedback, I coach them through and say when you did this behavior, you got this response. Then, I share several live examples, and we role play how they would handle it. If I am having a difficult conversation with the teacher, I demonstrate the tone of voice I use and the directness. Even if a staff member has made a huge common-sense mistake, I try to model for them that you still must be respectful.

The current team is very receptive to feedback and to learning, and five of them want to be principals. They are very open to the principal's actions and behaviors, and they try to emulate those same leadership behaviors. She shared,

They embrace me in terms of their boss, but it is more than that. They truly want to learn from me, so they can be super impactful when it is their turn to have their own school. I establish this by being in the work with them and sharing my thoughts and experiences out loud. I model how I communicate with students, parents, and remain very transparent in my work with them.

**Section 5- Commitment.** Lastly, Principal B responded to the commitment portion of the Administrator Interview Protocol. Principal B shared that she determines the budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development. Only the principal and business manager have access to the budget, so they are the decision makers. Staffing is based on enrollment, and the curriculum is determined by the state and district. Teacher grade level teams meet with their departments to determine the scope and sequence, and the dean oversees the



curriculum implementation. The dean's plan the beginning of the year professional development, and the teachers get a survey on what they think should be the meeting topics.

Principal B stated,

The SDMC gives feedback and suggestions, but they are made up of parents who don't really know anything about the curriculum. I communicate budget information with them, but they do not impact my decisions. Their role is basically to take the information I give them, and share it with the stakeholders.

Additionally, Principal B shared that she is very committed to the campus as the principal. She stressed the importance of everyone being on the same page, and stated the principal is vital to reduce CLT member burnout.

It is my role to model expectations, coach and develop the leadership team. I must make sure we are a cohesive unit. Everyone knows my expectations and vision, and because of this our scores have improved.

**Middle School B Campus Leadership Team Member.** CLT Member B has been an administrator at the school for four years. Prior to stepping into his current administrative role, he taught for six years at Middle School B. Then, he transferred into a dean position. All his administrative experience has been at this school. His primary duties involve: overseeing grade six, setting the tone for the entire grade level, managing student discipline, and leading the Social Studies department and curriculum. Additionally, he evaluates teachers and visits classrooms regularly to maintain visibility in the school.

***Section 1- Team Members.*** Since he has the most administrative experience on the campus, he serves as the principal when the principal is absent from duty. He often coaches

teachers and students, and he proactively calls homes to parents. To serve in his position, he was interviewed and hired by the principal. He shared, “

I was aware of the roles expected of me during the interview process, and she specifically chose me for the subject and grade levels based on what I taught when I was a teacher here. She introduced me to everyone on the first day of the school. For all of us, I don’t think that she went over the roles. She communicated the roles to us individually, and there was an assumption overall of what was expected. We all have the same expectations for student discipline and evaluations, but some areas rotate based on when the principal brings in innovative programs.

His roles not only define him as part of the CLT, but he also helps the principal lead by example. As the principal’s right hand, it is important for CLT Member B to demonstrate consistency more than the others. The team has three male and three female deans, and one dean is specifically over Special Education. The CLT members are divided into the following areas: one Hispanic, one African American, and one Caucasian. CLT Member B felt the team represented the demographics of the school well.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** CLT Member B defined leadership as:

having a belief in what you are doing and sharing that mission and vision with your staff.

You must make sure you communicate well and at the center do what is best for kids.

My decisions as the grade level Dean match my definition, because it is best for all students. They know I have the best in mind for students, and we are very cohesive as a team.

At School B, the CLT meets weekly, and updates the team on their various responsibilities and projects. Because of the structure, CLT Member B states that he never felt alone. Further, he shared,

The meetings ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction, and they can discover what works and what does not work. Since the members have smaller pieces of a large puzzle, they all have a stake in the school. These systems put in place by the leadership team allow us to sustain our work. The feedback and communication foster transparency in the school, and everyone can see what is happening with the leadership.

***Section 3- Character.*** When asked about the character of the team, CLT Member B stated,

Lofty expectations define us. The systems monitor us, and make sure everything is being done with fidelity. We have a lot of professional development to cover, but we need to make sure there is some buy in from the teachers and staff. We do allow them to lead the ones that have strong examples of classroom systems or differentiation.

CLT Member B also shared that they do not really have a system for defining character, but states they do this well. The principal can trust that the work is going to get done, because everyone carries their load. According to him, the principal knows that if something falls off, there are systems in place to know what happened.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** The CLT at School B mostly collaborates on professional development topics and the master schedule. During grade level meetings, the teams discuss how to fix errors and adjust. He reports the communication at the weekly meetings is very beneficial, so no one feels like an island. At the end of the year, the principal sent out a teacher interest survey for teachers to submit training topics and request assistance

when needed. Finally, he stated collaboration is evident because the team supports the principal and puts the principal's vision into place. In return, the principal does not have to worry about the grade levels.

***Section 5- Commitment.*** According to CLT Member B, he has been committed to the role long before he was even in the role. He shared,

I wanted to help kids, set high expectations, help them understand the consequences of their behavior, and I knew I wanted to do this beyond the walls of my classroom. My role is vital, because if we are not doing our job the principal and team members must pick up the slack. This burns everyone out of the job.

**Middle School C Principal's Response.** Principal C was selected by the district's interview process, and she has been in administration for eleven years. She served as a magnet coordinator, dean and two years as a principal. Her roles include: appraising teachers, facilitating weekly team meetings, marketing, recruiting teachers and students, and most recently nominating the school for the National Blue Ribbon Award. Her major responsibility is to be the main voice in shaping the message of the school, which is to be an advocate for all kids. In the past, she spent a lot of time recruiting, training students to lead tours and other general administrative tasks such as: buses, athletic duty and all areas of the assistant principals. She felt remarkable success when she was an assistant principal at the school, but coming back as the principal was hard for her. She shared:

There was a lot of change when I was gone. The school grew in some effective ways, but in some ways, it stayed stagnant which made me sad. It's not the place I left, so it has been a challenge because of the emotional response. But, I also had an advantage for challenges and real strengths in a way that a new principal would not have known.

The first major decision the principal made was to hire a business manager, so she could do less of the operations and focus on the instruction. Since the campus is busy, she knew she could easily get bogged down with the finances. This way, the business manager allowed her to lead instructional rounds with her assistant principals and teachers. Her goal is for the assistant principals to be strong. She also met with parents often, because she wanted parents to know that she is accessible. Her philosophy is resolving issues as soon as possible to avoid larger issues. Principal C prides herself on being visible and developing relationships with kids and parents.

***Section 1- Team Members.*** During the principal's first year on the job, she had twenty-five positions to fill in two weeks. The previous principal took the entire CLT and paraprofessional staff with her when she transitioned to a new school. Therefore, the principal had a big challenge ahead of her and needed those she could trust to help her. She looked for folks who were experts in a variety of areas, and then she asked them to join her team. She could fulfill all the positions she needed except for math. So, she supervised the mathematics department. During the first year, the CLT gathered in a room with a list of duties, and team members picked assignments based on their strengths. Over the course of the year and the summer, they traded responsibilities. To create a sustainable system, she started to train teachers who were interested in future promotions. She invested time and energy into faculty already on the campus, and slowly the team became complete. The role of the team is now divided into houses and the assistant principals have varied domains. Each assistant principal has a group of students and teachers he or she supervises along with activities. There is overlap where students in different grade levels need academic support in a specific subject area. The instructional coordinator is also a part of the CLT, and she fulfills curricular duties as assigned. The team

includes: one principal, three assistant principals, one business manager, one magnet coordinator and one instructional coordinator.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** Principal C reminds us that leadership is ever changing. She shared,

There are times when the leader needs to set the path and say this is where we are going.

The leader must have people who want to go with them. But, there is also the time where the leader asks what do we need to do and how are we going to get there? Then, you give the support and resources. If the leader is the only one setting the path, then one day they may not go with you. Leadership is a delicate balance and hard to do.

Her definition of leadership matched her day to day activities, but she also found herself needing to slow down at times. The team members are very cohesive working on schedules, and they all work in the same room. They physically move into the same proximity to work together. No one person in the group feels like they are doing more than the other. To develop leaders, Principal C follows these steps:

1. Talk with team members regarding challenges they face.
2. Ask them what they think will work.
3. Talk them through the roadblocks thoroughly.
4. Think through the strategy.

She implemented this process when she encountered an obstacle last year. The team became frustrated with one another, and they were not getting along. She had to become intentional and purposeful about each meeting. Through the weekly meetings, she pushed to maintain intentionality about how they used the time. The agenda included updates from each team

member, time to problem solve with each other and a learning focus for the team. Common goals are mentioned at each meeting as a reminder of the expectations of the team.

The system eventually carried over into their individual department meetings. The members' duties are consistent. They each have four hundred students and twelve to fifteen teachers assigned to them. They all manage discipline, and assist the principal with needs as they arise.

***Section 3- Character.*** Principal C shared that the vision and values drive the characteristics needed on the leadership team. She shared,

I want the CLT to value what makes the school magnificent for kids. I want to make sure we hire people that really embrace this. My team members are hard workers and thorough in their work. There is not a moment that I worry. Every single day everyone stops in and asks what I need, and they check in on me again at the end of the day. They are loyal and committed, and these are the characteristics that define us as a team.

Principal C described an organic team that formed together out of needing each other at the beginning of the year. They cross train each other, so the team remains sustainable. She continued to explain that they never wanted anyone else to walk into the school the way they entered, so they take pride in their work. She also looks for opportunities for members to experience, so she prides herself on developing leaders. She stated,

The character a team exemplifies should be driven by kids first and really respecting there is more to a child than math and reading. We want to give them the fundamentals of education without taking everything that is important to them. We adjust our master schedule that includes common planning periods, and this is non-negotiable. We value flexibility, so we can manipulate systems to benefit kids. Supporting our kids is key.

She further discussed the importance of trust.

We were all in the same rickety boat when we got here. We had to establish norms and create this team together. We developed a common goal, and we agreed to respect each other and talk through our issues. No one can assault one's character, but this type of trust takes time.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** Principal C explained the nature of the CLT is collaborative. They meet with their departments once or twice a week. The administrative role is to communicate by offering guided or probing questions about lesson design. They are expected to ask questions, check for understanding, and provide rigorous inquiry. As a team, they also define the master schedule and physically sit in a room together to negotiate classes, teachers and schedules. There is one team member who oversees the entire schedule process, but they all give feedback on what is important. After the master schedule, the most notable collaboration involves the Intervention Assistance Team process. The team realized there were several students underperforming. Now, the team gathers, and they discuss every child who fails. The CLT expands to include teachers during this process, and the teachers become part of the solution with guidance and coaching from the leadership.

Principal C noted that communication styles within the group vary. She recognized that sending a certain administrator to speak to a teacher may produce a better result than if she gave the feedback. She stated,

I am direct, but I can soften when it needs to be me over a CLT member. I just want the outcome to be successfully resolved, so we must leverage who is best in the moment given the circumstance.

She also shared,



At the end of the year, we implemented a systems and feedback survey. We had one-hundred percent student participation, fifty-six percent of faculty participation and over two hundred parent responses. I shared the bigger themes with the faculty and SDMC. The SDMC met quarterly and did a lot of work for how we are going to solve challenges and implement policies. This committee is vital to our school based improvement work. I also depend on the grade level cluster leaders to give me feedback, so I think we have all areas covered as far as collaborative communication.

***Section 5- Commitment.*** Lastly, Principal C responded to the commitment portion of the Administrator Interview Protocol. Principal C revealed her commitment to the campus and CLT began long before she was named the principal. She worked at the school previously, but then accepted a promotion as principal at another campus. She stated that she continued to remain committed to the campus, and she was honored to return to the campus even though there were many changes from when she left. Her commitment is what led her back to the campus when the principal position became open. She could take her experience as a building principal and align the budget, staffing, curriculum and planning pieces to honor her original commitment to all children at the school. She explained that in her absence, the values that the school was founded on appeared to have been lost. It was also apparent that there was a commitment to the former principal and not necessarily the campus and students. When the previous principal left, over 80% of the faculty (including CLT Members) transitioned with him to his new campus. She could persevere through the challenges, due to her established commitment to the school community. She utilized the SDMC to remind everyone the purpose of the school. She gathered feedback, implemented the suggestions that aligned with the campus vision, and created dialogue opportunities. Because of the new system in place, the principal made decisions which created

more access for students in a variety of settings. When parents didn't understand her decisions, she remained committed to the school and district. From this experience and to protect the sustainability of the school, Principal C admitted her role is vital. She spent the entire year modeling, coaching and developing the leadership team. Further, she supported teachers, parents, students, and felt the principal was the glue that held the team together.

My main goal is putting systems in place where all kids get a quality education.

Everyone now knows what we expect from kids, what teachers are to expect from them, and we have seen a twenty-five percent increase in closing the achievement gap in subgroups. I also must make sure that the teachers are just as committed to that work as I am. (Principal C, 2017).

**Middle School C Campus Leadership Team Member Response.** CLT Member C just finished his third year on the campus. He was an assistant principal for two years, and he oversaw a "house" system. As the house principal, his duties included: parent and teacher communication, discipline, and scheduling over four hundred students. He also met with every single eighth grader, and he established personal graduation plans with kids. He was responsible for the athletics, physical education and social studies departments, because he previously taught social studies and coached sports. He shared that although he wore many different hats, he felt balanced.

**Section 1- Team Members.** Prior to his role on the administrative team, CLT Member C met with his principal as a teacher, and they had a series of conversations. Together, they defined his new role. The principal promoted him, and he met everyone on the campus after he was hired. The campus experienced a complete turnover, and everyone was new. Because they needed a new instructional coordinator, magnet coordinator, and three assistant principals, he

assisted the principal with all the hires. One by one, they started to build a team. They hired people based on their academic backgrounds, and everyone worked together to add value to the team. They all appraised teachers by their strongest subject area and past experiences. The principal introduced the CLT to the staff via a summer email, parent letter, and an open house event for the parents in July. The team met the teachers during the August staff development. CLT Member C described his role as a team member.

My dynamic is to play devil's advocate. My personality and my objectivity are somewhat different, and I have ideas that I thought were good and sometimes not so clever ideas. My role is pretty much what is expected from all CLT members, but I am closest to the principal because she chose me first. I am her right hand so to speak, and she trusts me. We formed the team with three assistant principals, a magnet coordinator, an instructional coordinator who also served as the Special Education chair, the testing coordinator, and the business manager.

***Section 2- Leadership.*** CLT Member C defined leadership as follows:

Leaders lead from the rear. We work with those teachers or students who need the most assistance. I don't mean not jumping in when needed, but allowing others to take risks so they are responsible for their own successes and failures. They have a wide breath of their projects, and it is up to them. I want to see where they go, not where I would go.

He stated that his function matched his definition, although he has a tough role sometimes. He further shared that he has many projects such as a set schedule and lunch duty, and he demonstrates characteristics such as responsiveness and flexibility. CLT Member C described the team as a cohesive unit that works on the master schedule together, attends conferences

collectively, and speaks their minds freely. They physically work together in one space, so the leadership development is natural. He stated,

A lot of my own development comes through getting to observe and watch my teammates model for me. Then, I get to step through the hoop. This is a very smart group, and I have nothing but great compliments for my team. As the youngest administrator, I only have my past experiences. Through my observations of others, I gain lessons vicariously through their shared experiences. I reap the benefits of their leadership.

CLT Member C communicated the CLT roles were distributed evenly, but they step in for each other when there is a need. No one is worried about doing more than the other person if the job gets completed, and it all evens out in the end. This informal system allows the team to share the very best of their styles. He closed the topic by saying,

I don't think we have a concrete succession plan, but we do have continuity. In my mind, I know we have systems in place, and our team would never miss a beat because we are consistent and complimentary of each other.

***Section 3- Character.*** From the perspective of CLT Member C, the vision at Middle School C is to make sure that students have the right to the best education in the state. He shared,

It has been tricky to get all our teachers and parents on board for this vision. Most teachers are on board, but we understand as an educator that we need to make all students a priority. We can't say "no" to some students and "yes" to others. Middle schoolers have all sorts of motivation, and we don't want to sell kids short. In doing so, the consequences last a lot longer than a school year. We are almost there, but the problem is that it is a polarizing vision if you are not on board.

He further stated the school's expectation is that every child can learn and succeed. They hire teachers who have the following character traits: advocates for all students, leadership potential, initiative seekers, hard workers, and trustworthy. He stated,

We are around each other so much, and we must be able to communicate without fear of reprimand or taking anything too personally. For those who believe in the vision, we communicate openly and to see where another person is going. Even if we aren't all there yet, we don't tiptoe around it. We just must be all in, because this is what is best for our kids.

***Section 4- Collaborative Communication.*** CLT Member C shared that they have very gray limits on when they turn communication on and off. He stated,

We communicate twenty-four seven. We are all conditioned at this point; if it's nine at night and a conversation starts via text, we entertain it. If the trust and comradery isn't there, then we wouldn't be able to invade personal space. However, it doesn't feel like work. It feels like a group of people who want to come together for the greater good. This is different from other campuses, and I feel I am a part of every channel of communication. And, we can back each other up. Since we are all aware, it speaks to the governance of this group. It would be easy to plow through in isolation, but the work is more meaningful when it is together. The communication system is very rarely through email. It is text, or we speak briefly over the radio. We constantly meet in certain parts of the building throughout the day.

More formal opportunities for communication occur at the weekly meeting to address needs for the week. They honor this time together, and nothing else is scheduled during this time. The "sacred" time lasts anywhere from one to three hours.

***Section 5- Commitment.*** Lastly, CLT Member C responded to the commitment portion of the Administrator Interview Protocol. The budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization, and staff development is determined by the principal. He shared,

It really helps to have administration familiar with content areas, because we can make some local decisions. But, everything else is the principal. We provide a lot of feedback, and she runs her decisions through us. But, they are her decisions to make.

CLT Member C stated that he has been committed to the role since day one, and he never wavered. He described his commitment as steadfast where he can see, touch and taste the campus vision. Each day he questioned himself, “How do I get more people on board? What do we do with this group of students, so they fully realize their potential?” To further demonstrate his commitment, he said,

I am not having flirtations to work somewhere else. I am very loyal and committed to this place and my principal. I would like to think that I provide some longevity and objectivity when it comes to decision making and discipline, but doing so in a way that is non-judgmental. I know there is a different stop down the road for each of us and to a certain extent we are working to support each other. However, this is going to be a very different place when our principal leaves; I just don’t know if I would want to be here, if that were the case.

### **Campus Leadership Team Observations**

Observations were conducted to evaluate participants working in and with leadership teams and to determine the key characteristics of a successful campus team. One thirty-minute observation was conducted at each urban middle school. During the observations, information was gathered on how team members support the principal and noting elements aligned to the

Shared Leadership Framework were documented using field notes. The observation of the meetings was also recorded and corroborated with the field notes. Team meetings were observed to analyze the structure, agenda focus (instructional/non-instructional), defined roles, and interactions between the team members. The observation also determined the contributors of the information, and environmental factors were noted. Through the observation, insight would be gained to note interactions. The observation provided insight to how the CLT functions and interacts in relation to the shared leadership framework. Key characteristics of a successful campus leadership team surfaced, connections were made on how the CLTs support the principal, and elements aligned to the Shared Leadership Framework were highlighted. Meeting agendas and field notes were gathered from the principals of the schools prior to the observations.

After the observation, the researcher asked follow-up questions to administrators only regarding the components of the CLT. Specifically, the researcher sought information regarding previous principals and assistant principals/deans at the school for the past ten years. The following questions were asked:

1. Is there any other information about your CLT that you would like to share?
2. Have any of you served at this school on a CLT under any other principals?
3. If so, did the CLT function in the same way? Did the characteristics of a CLT (team members, leadership, character, collaborative communication and/or commitment) exist under the previous model?
4. Have you ever worked with your current principal outside of this campus?
5. Does your principal influence your decision to remain on the campus?
6. Does a CLT Member influence your decision to remain on the campus?

The purpose of these questions was to gather information regarding principal and team member longevity at the school as well as obtain insight into what makes a principal stay or leave a successful campus.

**Middle School A Campus Leadership Team Observation.** The observation of the School A CLT was during their regular scheduled meeting date. Meetings are held once a week on Tuesday with the expectation that all CLT members attend. Table 1 below outlines the CLT members and attendance at the meeting.

**Table 1**

***School A CLT Membership***

| <b>Campus Leadership Team Members</b>    | <b>Meeting Attendance</b> |
|--|---------------------------|
| Principal                                | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                         | Present                   |
| Assistant Principal                      | Present                   |
| Assistant Principal                      | Present                   |
| Assistant Principal                      | Present                   |
| Assistant Principal                      | Present                   |
| Assistant Principal                      | Absent                    |
| Instructional Specialist, Magnet         | Absent                    |
| Instructional Specialist, Data           | Present                   |
| Instructional Specialist, IB Coordinator | Present                   |
| Instructional Technologist               | Present                   |
| Counselor                                | Present                   |

Ten members of CLT A were present for the meeting. The principal was the leader of the meeting. All the members that were scheduled to attend the meeting arrived a few minutes before the start of the meeting or right on time. During the meeting, I observed the principal distribute the agenda to all members and review the meeting norms. The first item on the agenda was to celebrate accomplishments. The principal then requested suggestions on professional growth books that would benefit the leadership team and impact the campus. Suggestions were



to improve the leadership capacity of the team. Suggestions were also requested for teacher of the week. All suggestions were welcome from all members of the team. The members were free to share and offer suggestions as evidenced by the dialogue exchange. Each member was prepared to share or present what was needed to keep the meeting flowing. Secondly, the meeting moved into campus events that required input from all members of the team. Details were finalized and updated to move forward with meeting the projected timelines.

Additional items on the agenda included: planning for the next school year, budget, scheduling and professional development plans when teachers returned in August. Lastly, each assistant principal or instructional specialist reported on their areas. Each member gave a detailed update and presented questions that needed to be answered. The principal also posed questions to push or bring clarity to each topic. The leader over the academic area left with questions answered and a next step to continue leading their department.

**Follow-up to Observation Middle School A.** After the observation, the researcher asked follow-up questions regarding the components of the CLT to one dean, five assistant principals and the principal. Specifically, the researcher sought information regarding previous principals and administrators at the school for the past ten years. A summary of the responses is provided.

In the current structure, each CLT Member is responsible for a specific content area and the department teams work together to accomplish campus goals. CLT Members mentioned that the close alignment of the team structure and the weekly connection with the principal allows for vital communication. The principal takes notes and provides support and follow-up when necessary. Team members are confident in the areas due to the team being aligned to their strength. All areas of running the school are assigned and led by members of the CLT. The CLT

members support the structure denoted by the principal due to the commitment to the principal and the campus. CLT Member A stated she had been committed to the CLT for three years which is when the assistant principal was hired by the current principal. CLT Member A leads the mathematics department without constant guidance from the principal. The team is clear of the goals and what it is going to take to reach the goals. When updates are shared with the principal, the department is on target. This way, the principal can really focus on her assigned duties.

A well-functioning CLT is evident in the success of the campus and the leadership. School A is a large comprehensive middle school which demands more time than one campus leader can provide. The structures that are currently in place lend to student success, which allow the principal to remain at the school or be promoted to replicate the successful practices. CLT Member A concluded,

Through this structure, I now have a model that will be replicated when I become a principal. The school runs successfully due to the structures in place. It is easy to commit to the principal when there are systems in place due to the effective leadership practices. Not only are we committed to the school, but we are personally committed to our principal. I do whatever is asked by the principal, and whatever is needed to support her vision.

All but one of the team members revealed that they were hired by the current principal within the past three years. They did not personally know the principal; however, they were aware of her success in the school district. They mentioned that she had a strong successful reputation within the school district, and all of them were honored to work for her. The principal revealed that she had accepted a promotion at the district office as an assistant superintendent for the next school

year. The CLT members expressed sadness at the mention of this upcoming transition. Four of the assistant principals stated that they would be looking for principal jobs themselves for next year and a couple thought of applying for the principal job at Middle School A. The researcher asked why they chose next year to start applying for promotions. Two administrators felt they were ready based on the leadership opportunities the current principal provided. The others shared they would stay, if one of their own team members became the principal. They wanted to keep their team together and make their principal proud of them for continuing the work. Collectively, they alluded they were apprehensive about a new principal coming into the school who did not understand their school needs or support their current structures. The principal attempted to reassure them that they would be okay.

**Middle School B Campus Leadership Team Observation.** The observation of the School B CLT was during their regular scheduled meeting date. Meetings are held once a week on Tuesday with the expectation that all CLT members attend. Table 2 below outlines the CLT members and attendance at the meeting.

**Table 2**

***School B CLT Membership***

| <b>Campus Leadership Team Members</b> | <b>Meeting Attendance</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Principal                             | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Present                   |
| Dean of Students                      | Absent                    |

Six members of CLT B were present for the meeting. The principal was the leader of the meeting. The principal welcomed the team to the meeting and immediately started reviewing the

agenda. The first focus was on classroom instructional practices, which looked at celebrations and concerns. Many of the concerns were already shared with the principal. The discussion then shifted to determine if the concern was addressed. Each Dean only addressed concerns that were specific to their grade level or content area focus. The principal addressed the importance of addressing concerns immediately and reminded the team of being resolution driven. The next item on the agenda was a data reflection where the principal directed the CLT to update their data trackers for common assessments, and submit results to her by Wednesday of the following week. The principal requested that all team members be prepared to discuss in detail their data concerns, and how these concerns will be addressed. Principal B suggested that detailed plans be shared with their teachers for immediate implementation. The members noted the request and transitioned into a discipline discussion. Campus concerns regarding student discipline was noted. Not all members participated in the discussion. One member of the team noted off campus discipline issues that were occurring daily. The team was asked to provide solutions to the off-campus discipline issues, but the principal redirected the team to focus on campus issues within their jurisdiction. Next, a teacher who is struggling with classroom management was discussed. The Principal requested that one of the deans provide support to the teacher daily. She proclaimed, “Our job is to make sure that students are safe and assuring that discipline is not interfering with learning.” Then, attendance was addressed and the amount of money the campus will lose based on the current attendance rate. The Principal suggested strategies to improve attendance. The CLT felt as though all their suggestions had been utilized, and they expressed frustration with struggling attendance rates. Principal B proposed that each dean focus on the students that have missed the most school in their grade level and provide interventions to the student on an individual basis. Lastly, the team planned for a board trustee visit to the

campus that will take place next week. The principal stated the purpose of the visit, and the trustee's expectations of the visit.

During the meeting, the researcher observed the principal being the spokesperson for the team. Team members only contributed to the meeting, if they were asked a specific question. It was evident that team members were clear of the campus expectations, and the principal's purpose was to clarify any questions.

**Follow-up to Observation Middle School B.** After the observation, the researcher asked follow-up questions regarding the components of the CLT to five deans and the principal. Specifically, the researcher sought information regarding previous principals and administrators at the school for the past ten years. A summary of the responses is provided.

In the current structure, each CLT Member is assigned a grade level with a partner and the leader of specific content areas. The deans are responsible for providing professional development and meeting with departments to determine the focus for the year. The team is clear of the principal's expectations and the importance of carrying his or her load. The principal only steps in when it is evident that support is needed, and team members need assistance. For example, CLT Member B leads grade six and the social studies department without constant guidance from the principal. The principal recognizes the strong leadership characteristics of this CLT Member and assigns additional duties. He is willing to take on additional duties to support the principal. The team is clear of the campus expectations and monitoring the progress of meeting weekly campus goals. During the weekly meetings with the principal, each team member is ready to respond to any questions the principal may have to bring clarity to the situation. The principal may make note of follow-ups and an individual meeting will be

scheduled with the principal. The individual meeting will take time away from the principal, but it is important to get the team member back on target.

CLT Member B has been committed to school even when he was a teacher. Moving into leadership under the current principal extended his commitment to the campus at another level. He shared,

Commitment to the team is needed when you are paired with another administrator to lead a grade level. We work well together as a team when presented with solving a task or covering for another administrator when help is needed. It is vital to the principal and the team to remain on campus. The current accountability system is designed for schools to use teams of individuals to even manage the instructional load to meet the demands of the system, and our current structure is aligned to support the current state accountability system. Running a school without the support is impossible to manage, but being committed to the school is important to getting the work done. In this leadership capacity I can impact change before the four walls of a classroom. Fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to me is vital, then the principal will not have to pick-up my slack.

Since CLT Member B continued to dominate the conversation, the researcher questioned another administrator specifically. The second dean shared that their principal was being promoted as an assistant superintendent for the upcoming school year, and CLT Member B was going to be the new principal. The researcher asked if any of the CLT members had served under any other principals, and only CLT B mentioned that he was a teacher under the previous administration. He said the current CLT functioned more efficiently and was different from the past where the principal had more direct responsibilities. The team agreed that they have more instructional

duties than previous teams under past principals based on feedback from teachers. CLT Member B stated this was his motivator to apply for the principal position. He shared,

Our team has worked so hard to come together, and we are committed to our school. I hope that everyone will stay together to finish what we started. I know I am here for the long haul...for our kids.

The team was also celebrating the fact that their principal received the Principal of the Year Award for the district. They shared that they were proud to support her. They appeared proud of the recognition for their school, and they did not reveal that her promotion would encourage them to seek positions elsewhere in the district.

**Middle School C Campus Leadership Team Observation.** The observation of School C's CLT was an impromptu meeting outside of their regularly scheduled meeting calendar. Meetings are held once a week on Tuesday with the expectation that all CLT members attend. Table 3 below outlines the CLT members and attendance at the meeting.

**Table 3**

***School C CLT Membership***

| Campus Leadership Team Members   | Meeting Attendance |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Principal                        | Present            |
| Assistant Principal              | Present            |
| Assistant Principal              | Present            |
| Assistant Principal              | Present            |
| Instructional Specialist, Magnet | Present            |
| Instructional Specialist, Math   | Present            |
| Counselor                        | Present            |

Seven members of CLT C were present for the meeting. The principal was the leader of the meeting. A meeting was called to discuss a campus issue that needed to be addressed immediately. All the members of the CLT attend the meeting. During the meeting, the

researcher observed the principal inform the team of an issue and allowed the team to problem solve. The principal was the facilitator and not the sole decision maker. Team members were free to share their ideas, and they were valued by all team members. A resolution was reached, and all members agreed. The principal realized she had a captive audience and decided to review a few items that needed to be addressed by the CLT. The first item was to determine a deadline for the 2017-2018 planning calendar. Each member gave an update on their portion of the planning calendar and steps needed to arrive at completion. The team then came up with a timeline that was feasible for all team members. The members felt free to share and offer suggestions. Each member could provide detail on their particular portion and took notes on the feedback that was provided by their teammates. The principal assigned tasks that were aligned to the strengths of her team. CLT members suggested pairing a few team members together on more difficult tasks. Principal C reminded the team she is willing to support them in any area. Members expressed gratitude, and left the meeting. Even though this was an impromptu meeting, team members were willing to come together to problem solve as well as address future issues without any resistance.

**Follow-up to Observation Middle School C.** After the observation, the researcher asked follow-up questions regarding the components of the CLT to three assistant principals and the principal. Specifically, the researcher sought information regarding previous principals and administrators at the school for the past ten years. A summary of the responses is provided.

In the current structure, each CLT Member is responsible for a team and a content area related to his/her strength. CLT Member C mentioned that the leader of the content area is the decision maker and leads the instructional direction. The principal allows the leader to make all



instructional decisions if the data supports the work. When leaders do not have to worry about the content delivery, it elevates a huge burden off the leader. He shared,

When principals hire CLT Members with solid content knowledge, it frees the principal to become an expert in other areas where their expertise is needed. The principal then can focus on work that must be led by the principal. Other faculty members see us as the leader and never address content area issues with the principal.

CLT Member C shared his commitment to the CLT.

I was hired to fill the role of assistant principal. I have been committed to the principal's vision and trying to develop others to accept it. Remaining in my current position is easy to do with the current principal, because our current team came in with the principal and will remain with her if she is the principal. The only worry is that when you are considered effective there are always other leadership opportunities that arise. We have been groomed to function as the right hand of our leader and we will remain the right hand if she is the principal.

All three assistant principals shared that they worked for Principal C at their former school.

When the previous principal of Middle School C transitioned to a high school, he was approved to take his entire CLT with him. This left Middle School C void of a leadership team along with an unstable faculty. When the current principal was approached, she agreed to take the job, if she could bring her entire team from the elementary school with her. Of course, this stipulation was granted by the district. Middle School C Principal described this situation during the administrator interview protocol, and the team agreed with her account of the challenges they faced building a team together. CLT Member C reiterated that he did not want to be at the school without the current principal. The current principal repeated that she did not want to work

anywhere else, and she only agreed to come back because she could bring her own team. She believed in the school and her team, and they remained steadfast in making the campus a model school while leaning on one another.

### **Select School and District Documents**

To determine further information from the CLT, the researcher reviewed selected documents from the District and Schools A, B, and C in the STUSD. Those documents included principal history, organizational charts, district hiring procedures, CLT roles and responsibilities, TEA School Report Card, and School Improvement Plans. Since the record retention for SDMC minutes is life, documents selected after the implementation of shared decision making were embedded or attached to the campuses' SDMC meeting agendas and minutes. Documents selected prior to the implementation were random based on availability at the district archives.

According to the Texas Education Agency (2016), the campus leadership team (CLT) consist of key leaders responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the targeted improvement plan, monitoring student performance, and determining student interventions and support services. This process is intended for decentralizing decisions to improve the educational outcomes at every school campus through a collaborative effort by which principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives assess educational outcomes of all students, determine goals and strategies, and ensure that strategies are implemented and adjusted to improve student achievement (TEA Resource Guide, 2010). Consistently, teams meet for assisting the principal with shared decision making. The shared decision-making responsibilities of the CLT members are aligned with the SBDM (state requirements) and SDMC (local requirements) which include budgeting, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development. The members on the CLT responsible for

staffing may be certified appraisers which act as liaisons to their respective departments, teams and organizations throughout the campus as well as identify problem areas and offer suggestions for improvement (TEA). All members on the CLT are guided by standards developed by a campus within context of state and district guidelines, make sure the campus organization structure is arranged functionally to encourage and facilitate shared team decision making and input, and verify that site-based decision making is established and working (TEA Resource Guide, 2010). For the researcher to understand and determine the impact of CLT's on principal retention at each campus, the researcher must gain insight into the history of principals and teams in the STUSD. For this study, the two SDMC components, staffing and school organization, have been reviewed to obtain information regarding principal retention.

### **Middle School A SDMC Documents**

Middle School A opened in 1926, and informal documents included PTO minutes and various brochures and fliers. Most of the information discovered prior to 1990 focused on school history, politics, segregation, and the organization and establishment of the school as it converted to a magnet school in the seventies. It wasn't until 1990, through the review of the STUSD's Board of Education documents, that a declaration of a belief and vision statement for the district changed the focus of the school. In 1990, a positive statement was created that mentioned shared decision-making through local control. The STUSD Board revisited this document in 2001, 2004 and 2010 and again gave local control to principals through a shared decision-making concept. Over time, the board added a core initiative which stated the district would provide a level of support to teachers and school leaders.

**Staffing and School Organization.** The campus leadership team consists of twelve team members holding the following positions: principal, six assistant principals, two instructional

specialists (data & technology), magnet/International Baccalaureate coordinator and a counselor. The duties of the team were assigned by the building principal and aligned to the campus needs. The roles and responsibilities were distributed equally across the team. Three of the members of the team serve as the grade level administrator for a specific grade level. Serving as a grade level administrator is granted to leaders that have multiple years of campus leadership experience. Leaders in this capacity have proven leadership in school leadership. The structure of the CLT was developed to meet the unique needs of the current campus structure. Conferring with the required SDMC membership composition two, members from the CLT serves as an official member of the SDMC at school A.

According to the SDMC minutes from 2002 until present, Middle School A has had five principals. From 2002-2010, all principals averaged four years. This was prior to the implementation of shared decision making. In alignment with the district's Belief and Vision Statement, shared decision making in the form of CLTs arose in 2011. From 2011-present, the school has had two principals. Records revealed that the principal from 2011-2014 left due to retirement from education after twenty-five years of service. The principal remained retired for a brief period and returned to the district to support first year principals and administrators. The team that was in place consisted of four administrators and one counselor. Only one member remained, and the other members took various position across the state of Texas in other school districts according to Middle School Principal A. The principal from 2014-2017 left due to a promotion to a District Level position. Not only did the principal receive a substantial pay increase, two of the members CLT were granted principalships within the district.

## **Middle School B SDMC Documents**

Middle School B opened its doors in 2002. At the time the school was created, the district had already recognized a need for more campus and leader support, although the board did not define the support. Documents reviewed were divided into two categories, pre-implementation of Shared Decision Making and after implementation of Shared Decision Making.

**Staffing and School Organization.** The campus leadership team consists of seven team members holding the following positions: principal and six assistant principals. The duties of the team are determined by the building principal and divided to accommodate the grade level structures. Each grade level administrator is assigned to a grade level to oversee in collaboration with another leadership team member. The roles and responsibilities are not distributed equally across the team. The principal relies heavily on one member of the team to take on additional duties and serve as principal in the absence of the principal. Two Deans are assigned to each grade level to manage student load, discipline, and lead teachers at that assigned grade level. In addition to grade level, the Deans are responsible for appraising a group of teachers aligned to the content area strength. Conferring with the required SDMC membership composition, one member from the CLT serves as an official member of the SDMC at school B.

According to the SDMC minutes from 2002 until present, Middle School B has had three principals. From 2002-2010, all principals averaged four years. Records revealed that the principal from 2008-2011 left due to her husband accepting a superintendent position in another state. The team that was in place consisted of five deans and one counselor. The principal from 2011-2016 left for a promotion to a central office position. Not only did the principal receive a pay increase, one member of the CLT was selected to fulfill the role as the principal. This was prior to the implementation of shared decision making. In alignment with the district's Belief and

Vision Statement, shared decision making in the form of CLTs arose in 2011. From 2011-present, the school has had three principals. Records revealed that the principal from 2011-2015 left due to a promotion at central office.

### **Middle School C SDMC Documents**

Middle School C opened its doors in 2002. At the time the school was created, the district had already recognized a need for more campus and leader support, although the board did not define the support. Documents reviewed were divided into two categories, pre-implementation of Shared Decision Making and after implementation of Shared Decision Making.

**Staffing and School Organization.** The campus leadership team consists of six team members holding the following positions: principal, three assistant principals, business manager and magnet/Foreign Language coordinator. The duties of the team were established by the building principal and divided into a three-house structure. Each grade level house leader is assigned to a specific area and grade level as designated by the principal. The roles and responsibilities are distributed equally across the team. The magnet coordinator and business manager focus specifically on the functional areas. The principal relies heavily on the house principals to lead their respective areas. In addition to house principal duties, the assistant principals are responsible for appraising teachers and providing feedback to improve instructional practices. Conferring with the required SDMC membership composition, two members from the CLT serve as an official member of the SDMC at school C.

According to the SDMC minutes from 2002 until present, Middle School C has had four principals. From 2002-2010, both principals averaged four years. This was prior to the implementation of shared decision making. In alignment with the district's Belief and Vision Statement, shared decision making in the form of CLTs arose in 2011. From 2011-present, the

school has had two principals. Records revealed that the principal from 2011-2015 left due to a promotion to a high needs campus. Not only did the principal receive a substantial pay increase, the principal took her entire CLT to the new school according to Middle School Principal C.

### **District Leadership Hiring and Retention Practices**

The Southeast Texas Urban School District aligns school leaders hiring practices with the state of Texas. To obtain a school leadership position in the state of Texas, the leader must be eligible to receive a standard administrator certificate. To obtain a certificate, an individual must successfully complete the educator's assessment required under 19 Administrative Code §230.5. The candidate must hold a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. The STUSD requires three years of creditable teaching experience as a classroom teacher, as defined by 19 Administrative Code Chapter §230, Subchapter Y. Prior years in an instructional leadership role is always a plus. In addition to the requirements noted above, effective communication, public relations, and interpersonal skills are essential. Candidates with a desire to lead, robust self-esteem, and possess audacity are other attributes that the STUSD considers.

According to Education Code §11.202c, "the school leader is the instructional leader of the school and shall be provided with adequate training and personnel assistance to assume that role. It is the principal's responsibility to hire a campus leadership team to assist them with meeting campus needs. Each principal shall:

1. Approve all teacher and staff appointments for that principal's campus from a pool of applicants selected by the district or of applicants who meet the hiring requirements established by the district based on criteria developed by the principal after informal consultation with the faculty.

2. Set specific education objectives for the campus through the planning process under Section 11.253.
3. Develop budgets for the campus.
4. Assume the administrative responsibility and instructional leadership under the supervision of the superintendent for discipline at the campus.
5. Assign, evaluate, and promote personnel assigned to the campus.
6. Recommend to the superintendent the termination or suspension of an employee assigned to the campus or the nonrenewal of the term contract of an employee assigned to the campus.
7. Perform other duties assigned by the superintendent pursuant to the policy of the board of trustees.
8. Regularly consult with the SDMC in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus educational program.
9. Each school year, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan.

The Education Code and STUSD's board policy are aligned to leadership duties. The board of trustees of a school district shall adopt a policy for the selection of a campus leaders that includes qualifications required for that position. This is where differentiation among school districts across the state of Texas. The superintendent or the person designated by the superintendent has final placement authority for a teacher transferring because of enrollment shifts or program changes in the district. Superintendents have the authority to override hiring decisions made by the principal for several reasons.



In addition to state standards the STUSD uses a Haberman tool to predict if a candidate will succeed in serving students in an urban school district. The tool may be used with experienced or inexperienced leaders who are interested in leading an urban school. A value-added system is used to determine a schools' level of effectiveness. Each student is expected to grow at least one standard deviation in each school year. The STUSD believes the value system is a commitment to improve teaching and learning, so that all students can reach their highest potential and receive high-quality education. School leaders find their contracts at risk, if the student achievement data is not at the threshold level to determine a leader's level of effectiveness. Developing a campus leadership team that provides adequate support to meet the academic needs of students is a must. According to Schools A, B and C's TEA School Report Card and principal history, the principals remained on campus as student achievement data remained constant or improved.

Since one of the district's core values is to place a highly effective principal on every campus, the district is known to hire principals who set conditions to their hiring. For example, two principals made requests to take entire CLTs with them to the new campuses, and the requests were granted. The district aims to retain highly effective principals so much that they often accept any requests the principals make in the beginning of their principalships. In reviewing historical documents for Middle School C, the researcher discovered that the 2004-2010 principal accepted a promotion at the feeder pattern high school. He accepted the role on one condition, which was to take his entire CLT with him to the new school. His request was granted; and therefore, we see a trend of highly successful principals accepting promotions if they can take their CLTs with them from one campus to the next.

## **Select School and District Document Overview**

The selected documents revealed the following consistencies in the STUSD:

1. The district has a consistent hiring protocol that was utilized to hire all three principals.
2. Although the district interview process is consistent for principal hires, CLT Member hires are at the discretion of the principal.
3. The school district has defined Job Descriptions for each CLT Member with other duties as assigned per principal.
4. The district has defined policies and procedures regarding the Shared Based Decision-Making Committee.
5. Principals and school staff have defined roles within the SBDM policy.
6. The STUSD has a clear vision for principals and schools as outlined in their Declaration of Beliefs and Visions documents.
7. The STUSD has a clear timeline for when SBDM was established.
8. Schools in the STUSD can be divided into two categories: pre-implementation of SBDM and implementation of SBDM.
9. The STUSD has shown a trend of highly successful principals accepting promotions if they can take their CLTs with them from one campus to the next.

The selected documents chosen were necessary for review to connect the data and findings collected through the administration of the Administrator Interview Protocol and Observations conducted by the researcher.

## **Summary**

In summation, the researcher provided the campuses' demographic data, and she explained the coding protocol for the study. Additionally, the researcher organized the responses

to the Administrator Interview Protocol according to the research questions. The results are noted in Tables 4 and 5 where Principal A is coded as (PA); Principal B is coded as (PB), and Principal C is coded as (PC).

**Table 4**

***Principal Participant Response Summaries***

| <b>Shared Leadership Elements</b> | <b>Questions</b>  | <b>Summary of Responses</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Team Member</b>                | <i>How were you selected to be a part of the CLT?</i>             | (PA) District interview process/selected role of principal leader of CLT; (PB) District interview process; (PC) Interview process   |
|                                   | How were the roles established and selected?                      | (PA) Roles were selected based on needs; (PB) Based on academic content areas; (PC) Time sensitive principal decision of people she knew  |
|                                   | How did the principal introduce the leadership team to the staff? | (PA) Introduced as soon as they were hired, beginning of the year introduction through faculty and department; (PB) Introduced at welcome back at the beginning of the year; (PC) sent out a meet the staff flyer to faculty and parents                |
|                                   | How would you describe your role on the Campus Leadership Team?   | (PA) Facilitator who provided resources to the team and alignment resources and budget; (PB) Coaching and developing CLT; (PC) Lead math department out of necessity, role was a team member due to staff shortage, coached team when time permitted    |
|                                   | What is the current make-up of the campus leadership team?        | (PA) Principal, Assistant Principals, Dean, Counselor, Technologist, IB and Magnet Coordinator and Data Specialist; (PB) Principal and six deans of instruction; (PC) Principal, three APs, Business Manager, IC and MC                                 |
| <b>Leadership</b>                 | What does “leadership” mean to you?                               | (PA) Followers following the leader and a group that believe in what you believe to move the organization; (PB) Establishing goals and visions and individuals journey with you; (PC) Leaders sets the path and people follow                           |
|                                   | Is your team a cohesive unit or do individuals work in isolation? | (PA) Cohesive unit with individuals working in formation; (PB) No, one team member isolated; (PC) Yes, they work well together  |
|                                   | How do you develop as a leadership team member?                   | (PA) Seek out ways to develop oneself in order to be an effective facilitator of team; (PB) Meets individually and each has an individual plan of action; (PC) Rich conversations, makes time, keep abreast of latest research, consistent expectations |

**Table 4 continued**

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                    | Are leadership responsibilities distributed equitably across the team?   | (PA) Distributed equitably across the team with specific duties and grade level responsibilities only give the team member what they can handle; (PB) No, duties are assigned by principal based on their strengths; (PC) Yes, jobs are equal  |
|                                    | Is there a system for building leadership capacity to sustain the campus system?   | (PA) Team members are cross trained and given opportunities to lead areas outside of their traditional daily duties; (PB) Systems are specific to principal not the school; (PC) Cross-trained   |
| <b>Character</b>                   | Explain the vision and set of values that defines the campus leadership team.  | (PA) Focus on all students; (PB) Every single kid gets a quality education, influential, flexible, loyalty, follow policy; (PC) Make the school magnificent for kids and hire people who can provide that to student   |
|                                    | Do the leaders on your team make adjustments to organizational structures, redesign roles and distribute leadership in ways to promote greater staff engagement and ownership? | (PA) Yes, leaders have autonomy over their cohorts; (PB) Yes, adjustments are designed by the principal; (PC) Yes, they are flexible and manipulate what is best for kids  |
|                                    | How is trust established among the members of your campus leadership team?   | (PA) Norm on the agenda communicated by the principal; (PB) The expectation (PC) They establish norms  |
| <b>Collaborative Communication</b> | What collaborative examples can you share that are in place at your campus?  | (PA) CLT meets once per week and task from weekly/monthly meeting are share with clusters and grade levels; (PB) Professional development and SBDM; (PC) Departments meet once or twice per week, talk about all students failing, admin offers probing questions, survey to the community, SDMC meets quarterly |
|                                    | How would you describe your communication system in relation to the campus leadership team?  | (PA) Open and guided by norms with a feedback system for written feedback; (PB) End of year survey, grade level team planning, prefers face to face dialogue, weekly meetings every Friday, does not prefer text of emails; (PC) Meet and dialogue about everything  |

**Table 4 continued**

|                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
|                   | What systems does your campus team have in place to accept feedback, guidance, suggestions and coaching in relation to and among campus issues? | (PA) Open and guided by norms with a feedback system for written feedback; (PB) End of year survey to staff, models for the CLT; (PC) SDMC, communication going both ways   |
|                   | What roles have you embraced to support the campus principal?   | N/A   |
| <b>Commitment</b> | <i>Who determines the budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development?</i>                                    | (PA) The SDMC; (PB) The principal and business manager makes the decisions and informs the SDMC, Follows state and district curriculum, PD is based on staff survey; (PC) The principal and explains to SDMC about decisions that were made and gets feedback, due to CLT handling day to day task she can focus on budget, staffing, curriculum, planning and PD |
|                   | What are some specific ways team members participate in this process?   | (PA) Two CLT members are on SDMC; (PB) CLT , do not participate in the process they clearly just listen only support August PD; (PC) Provide principal with information prior to the meeting to make an informed decision   |
|                   | How long have you been committed to the role you serve of the CLT?  | (PA) Principal three years; (PB) Principal four years; (PC) Long before she was the principal committed when she was a teacher that lead her back to lead the campus  |
|                   | Do you feel your role on the CLT is vital in reducing team members and principal turnover?  | (PA) Yes; (PB) Yes, I have to teach them everything; (PC) The CLT as a whole is vital   |

In Table 5, CLT Member A is coded as (MA); CLT Member B is coded as (MB), and CLT Member C is coded as (MC).

**Table 5**

***CLT Member Participant Response Summaries***

| <b>Shared Leadership Elements</b> | <b>Questions</b>   | <b>Summary of Responses</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Team Member</b>                | <i>How were you selected to be a part of the Campus Leadership Team?</i> | (MA) Interviewed by the team, (MB) Selected by principal interview; (MC) selected by the principal   |
|                                   | How were the roles established and selected?                             | (MA) selected based on shared vision and content area; (MB) what he previously taught; (MC) strengths  |
|                                   | How did the principal introduce the leadership team to the staff?        | (MA) Faculty meeting; (MB) First day of school; (MC) email, summer letter, parent event in July  |
|                                   | How would you describe your role on the Campus Leadership Team?          | (MA) Over math and has independent assignment; (MB) Over social studies and a grade level, sets examples for other;(MC) principal's right hand, house principal  |
|                                   | What is the current make-up of the campus leadership team?               | (MA) Principal, Assistant Principals, Dean, Counselor, Technologist, IB and Magnet Coordinator and Data Specialist; (MB) Principal and six deans of instruction; (MC) Principal, three APs, Business Manager, Instructional Coordinator and Magnet Coordinator |
| <b>Leadership</b>                 | What does "leadership" mean to you?                                      | (MA) A team has a goal and carries it out; (MB) Belief that you are sharing the mission and vision with your staff;(MC) support ALL kids   |
|                                   | Is your team a cohesive unit or do individuals work in isolation?        | (MA) Yes (MB) Yes (MC) Yes   |
|                                   | How do you develop as a leadership team member?                          | (MA) Set goal and review them (MB) (MC)  |

**Table 5 continued**

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                    | Are leadership responsibilities distributed equitably across the team? How do you assist the school principal with leadership responsibilities?                                | (MA) Yes/providing input and filling responsibilities; (MB) No, chosen as the principal's right hand and we all have the same expectations, but some have new roles based on programs that come in; (MC) Yes |
|                                    | Is there a system for building leadership capacity to sustain the campus system?   | (MA) Yes, cross trained (MB) Stated yes, but members are not cross trained;(MC) Yes, the team does everything together   |
| <b>Character</b>                   | Explain the vision and set of values that defines the campus leadership team.  | (MA) For all students to be safe and successful; (MB) High expectations; (MC) Want students to have the best education, equity   |
|                                    | Do the leaders on your team make adjustments to organizational structures, redesign roles and distribute leadership in ways to promote greater staff engagement and ownership? | (MA) Yes, friends outside of school and support each other as a family; (MB) Did not answer; (MC) Yes, hire teacher who advocate for all students  |
|                                    | How is trust established among the members of your campus leadership team?   | (MA) Team members adhere to norm (MB) everyone carries their load and are monitored by the principal;(MC) Safe space to communicate and encouraged to communicate openly                                     |
| <b>Collaborative Communication</b> | What collaborative examples can you share that are in place at your campus?  | (MA) Master schedule (MB) August PD and master schedule; (MC) Anything about students  |
|                                    | How would you describe your communication system in relation to the campus leadership team?  | (MA) Varies, meetings, face-to-face, phone calls, involves everyone (MB) Weekly meetings; (MC) Communicate 24/7, text, face-to-face, weekly, impromptu daily meetings  |
|                                    | What systems does your campus team have in place to accept feedback, guidance, suggestions and coaching in relation to and among campus issues?                                | (MA) Relationships allow two way communication; (MB) Teacher survey at the end of the year; (MC) Through SDMC and face-to-face communication   |

**Table 5 continued**

|                   |  |   |
|-------------------|--|---|
|                   | What roles have you embraced to support the campus principal?  | (MA) Anything she needs; (MB) Put the principal's vision in place; (MC) Provides longevity and objectivity and loyal to the principal |
| <b>Commitment</b> | <i>Who determines the budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development?</i> | (MA) The entire team; (MB) N/A; (MC) Team discuss decision and principal makes final decision   |
|                   | What are some specific ways team members participate in this process?  | (MA) Listen and provide input; (MB) N/A; (MC) SDMC members and meetings on topics from SDMC meeting, local decision making            |
|                   | How long have you been committed to the role you serve of the CLT?   | (MA) Three years; (MB) Ten years as teacher and CLT member; (MC) Three years as teacher and assistant principal                       |
|                   | Do you feel your role on the CLT is vital in reducing team members and principal turnover?                   | (MA) The entire CLT is vital not just one person; (MB) Yes; (MC) Every member on the team including the principal is vital            |

Observations were conducted to evaluate participants working in and with CLTs and to determine the key characteristics of a successful team. The observation provided insight to how the CLT functions and interacts in relation to the shared leadership framework. After the observation, the researcher asked follow-up questions to administrators regarding the components of the CLT. Specifically, the researcher sought information regarding previous principals and assistant principals/deans at the school for the past ten years. The purpose of these questions was to gather information regarding principal and team member longevity at the school as well as obtain insight into what makes a principal stay or leave a successful campus. To determine further information from the CLT, the researcher reviewed selected documents from the District and Schools A, B, and C in the STUSD. Those documents included principal history, organizational charts, district hiring procedures, CLT roles and responsibilities, TEA School



Report Card, and School Improvement Plans. The information regarding the SBDM staffing and organizational structures for each campus were noted, and a historical summary of the school was provided for the last ten years. Additionally, district hiring and retention practices were outlined in this chapter and consistencies among hiring practices were noted.

These findings will be used in the next chapter to determine whether CLTs influence principal retention, change in relation to the principal's perception, and demonstrate characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chapter five presents the findings, implications and recommendations of this study along with a conceptual leadership framework to explain the findings of this research study. The multiple site case study used to arrive at these results were described in chapter three. The Administrator Interview Protocol, observations and selected district and school documents produced full and complete findings. The case study analysis allowed the researcher to gather detailed rich descriptions from principals and campus leadership team members' experiences. The findings are presented in three parts, beginning with a summary of the results of the research questions. Secondly, implications for practice are presented. Lastly, recommendations for further research and a summary of the study close the chapter.

### **Problem Statement**

There is a need to determine how CLTs influence principal retention in urban middle schools. Since 2009, half of beginning Texas public school principals remained on the job three years or less. According to the Texas Education Agency (2016), principals in low-socioeconomic schools are reportedly leaving more rapidly. The cost to replace a principal is over seventy-five thousand dollars, and this does not include the principal salary (School, 2014). Principal pipeline costs include: preparing principals range from twenty-thousand dollars to one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars, hiring costs range from approximately six thousand dollars to twenty thousand dollars, signing bonuses may include up to twenty-five thousand dollars, internships cost up to eighty-five thousand dollars, mentoring turnover costs include eleven-thousand dollars to fifteen thousand dollars and continuing education costs eight-thousand dollars. For some districts, the price of turnover is entirely too much totaling over three-hundred thousand dollars (School, 2014). When expanding this problem from local districts to the nation,

the United States spent one-hundred and sixty-three million annually alone in affluent schools (Schools, 2014).

Additionally, school ratings show limited growth as standards increase and students move to high school less prepared academically. Because of the principal loss, students achieve less in both math and reading during the first year after leader turnover. Over time, the impact on student achievement cumulates negative effects on staff and students in underprivileged schools so much that the effects cannot be undone (Loeb et al., 2010). Lofty policies, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Every Student Succeed Act of 2014, are well-intentioned, but often unrealistic (US Department, 2017). Several school leaders are entering education as a secondary career without receiving the traditional college of education career pathways. Many educators land their first jobs looking for the support to be successful. The continued push for student achievement has challenged many public-school systems to evaluate programs and procedures that have long been in place. The requests for greater accountability in student achievement and financial constraints have forced school systems at the local level to examine how schools are organized (Trimble & Rottier, 1998). With student achievement declining in urban areas and principals exiting the profession, successful leaders have been known to utilize the team approach to move the needle in the field of education (Farmer, Grissom, McQueen & Ronfeldt 2015). Because of the reasons, the role of the head of school has shifted from a school being led solely by a principal to campus decisions being made using a specialized group of educators (Lambert, 2002). The prominent issue that is not yet confirmed is how CLTs influence school leaders, and if it directly impacts principal retention.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Campus Leadership Teams in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework model.

Additionally, did characteristics of successful CLTs alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention?

Since it is not known how the principal perceives change in relation to CLTs and to what extent CLTs demonstrate characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework, the study will benefit urban district superintendents who are responsible for principal hires. This research will also provide a shared leadership model for principals in urban middle schools, provide case studies to principals and superintendents to model effective and ineffective practices, and provide research to urban districts to preserve principals.

## **Methodology Overview**

This multiple site case study was used to understand the influence of CLTs on principal retention on urban middle schools. Case study research is an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as ongoing school based planning and decision making, leadership stability, or school improvement programs and interventions, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of these phenomena (Mertens, 2015). This methodology focuses on the concept of case, the example or instance from a class or group of events, issues, or programs, and how people interact with components of these phenomena (Moore, Lapan, & Quartaroli, 2012).

Because the study involved several campuses, the research design for this study was a multi-site descriptive and interpretive case study. "A multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases, and the goal is to replicate findings across

cases” (Yin, 2003). The researcher could draw comparisons of principals and their CLTs while predicting comparable results across the studies or contrasting outcomes in relation to one another and the Shared Leadership Framework. Yin (2003) described how multiple case studies can be used to either, “(a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)” (p. 47). This type of design can be considered strong and dependable, but it can also be time consuming for researchers.

Stake (1995) concurred with Yin (2003) by referring to a multi-site case study as a collective case study when more than one case is being examined. The researcher recognized the appropriateness of the case study based on Stake’s following components:

1. the purpose of the inquiry into principals’ perceptions of CLTs and the characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework is to provide understanding;
2. the role of the researcher is personal, since the researcher is a principal; and,
3. the knowledge the researcher gains will be constructed rather than discovered.

Furthermore, this case study described what it is like for the researcher to be present, capture rich descriptions and interpret the circumstances (Stake, 1995). For a case study to be rigorous, Miles & Huberman (1994) require additional components such as the application of a conceptual framework. This addition supported the researcher’s introduction of the Shared Leadership Framework. Similarly, if a researcher wanted to study principals in urban middle schools across the United States, then a multiple case study would be an appropriate method to consider.

**Data analysis.** Yin (2014) suggested that every investigation should have a general analytic strategy, to guide the decision regarding what will be analyzed and for what reason. The basic principal of case study analysis consists of making a detailed rich description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, the researcher sought to understand meaning as

well as correlate the relationship between the data and the conceptual framework. After the researcher conducted the interviews, the recordings were transcribed by Rev.com verbatim. The transcription was placed into a word document double spaced and sorted into a graphic organizer noting the key elements of the Shared Leadership Framework. Each element was assigned a number. The results were coded according to the following: Team Members=1, Leadership=2, Character=3, Collaborative Communication=4 and Commitment=5. A sixth code was assigned for principal perception=6. This analysis was replicated for each principal and team member interview. There was a total of six coding documents from the interviews. Within the space of each graphic organizer, the researcher noted emerging ideas and reactions that occur. After the initial coding, the researcher organized the content by the specific elements and identifiably compared the elements from the campuses to the conceptual framework.

Additionally, the researcher simultaneously collected and analyzed data from observations and documents collected from the principal, website and district. The observations were recorded and transcribed verbatim by Rev.com. The same coding process were used throughout the study, which entailed a total of three coding documents. The researcher looked for relationships among the data, remained open to all possibilities, and worked to understand the context of the campus. “The final product of building theory from case studies may be concepts, a conceptual framework, or propositions or possibly mid-range theory. On the downside, the final product may be disappointing. The research may simply replicate prior theory, or there may be no clear patterns within the data” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.545).

In general, the analysis relied on the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. If theoretical propositions were not present, then the researcher considered developing a descriptive framework around which the case study is organized. Before this was considered, the researcher

could not rely on first impressions, ignore conflicting information, and avoid hard to find information or become overwhelmed with the amount of data produced in the study.

**Limitations of methods.** The field of education has always focused on the campus principal as the sole leader of a campus. The stipulation that is being put on the principal is not remaining at a steady pace, but rapidly changing daily in some school systems. CLTs will only have less than one academic year to influence principal retention. The multiple site case study will only take place in three urban middle schools in one district. Principals at the middle schools represent only a small population of urban leaders in the state of Texas involved in the study. The researcher also must consider other variables that may influence principals' perceptions and decisions to stay in their current roles. The experience of the leader is not taken into consideration, for first year school leadership looks differently than an experienced school leader. Further research will be necessary to see if the years of experience impact a campus leadership team's effectiveness. Other factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of campus leadership teams may be missed.

In summation, multiple case studies can be difficult for a researcher to navigate. Unlike most quantitative studies, a qualitative multiple site case study may involve very few participants to make the study manageable. The researcher already assumes that the study can be replicated from one site to the next and the data is comparable. Likewise, the researcher assumes if data is contrasted, it is contrasted similarly across the setting. For a qualitative multiple site case study to be robust and valid, it is often very time consuming and expensive (Yin, 2003).

**Significance.** This research study will not only serve to expand the literature, but also encourage superintendents to provide professional development on best leadership practices such as Campus Leadership Teams to retain principals. First and foremost, districts may use this study

to gather data on principal perceptions and discover the length of time a principal will stay in his or her current role. This is beneficial to a superintendent due to the thousands of dollars it costs to replace a principal. Lastly, these findings will be useful to districts to help target areas for principal retention and validate effective principals that remain in their positions. Districts may use a successful principal and his or her campus leadership team as a model to replicate desired results.

For principals, this study will provide feedback to team members and the key roles they play in providing support to a principal. They will feel like leaders are contributors to students meeting their instructional goals. They will also see collaboration as a natural thing to do when it comes to improving their instructional practices. The goal of the team is to alleviate the burden on school leaders. From the campus leadership team, principals will feel supported. And in return, their performance will improve, and student achievement will increase. The leadership team approach will continue to cultivate as leaders begin to see the significant improvement in student performance. Campus leaders will be enlightened by the collaboration between campus leadership teams and how it influences the principal's responsibilities. If the team collaboration is done with fidelity, the results will directly impact student achievement. Leaders will make connections between leadership support and how it will influence the principal retention.

The significance of the study will identify how teams should be able to immediately meet campus needs, which can prevent the principal from resigning as a public-school leader. However, the number of principals that walk away from the profession due to enormous loads at the campus level, will decrease due to the leadership team support. In this era of education, for a principal to be successful as a school leader, it is going to require a team approach.



## **Summary of Results of Research Questions**

The multiple site case study used a constructivist epistemological stance and a theoretical perspective of interpretivism to answer the research questions. The three research questions sought out to establish correlation between the campus leadership team and principal retention in relation to the Shared Leadership Framework. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the campus leadership team demonstrate characteristics of a selected research based leadership framework?
2. How does one perceive the principal role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams?
3. How and to what extent does the structure and process of a campus leadership team influence principal retention?

The data necessary for this research consisted of collecting responses from a purposefully selected Southeast Texas Urban School District (STUSD) to determine if campus leadership teams influence principal retention. The schools used were assumed to be successful schools in the STUSD based on the research criteria of Met Standards according to the Texas Education Agency (2016) accountability rating system for three consecutive years and received at least four designated distinctions. The leadership years of experience of the principal and the team included a minimum of one year of leadership experience. Every leadership team member appraised teachers using the district approved appraisal instrument and holds a current principal or mid-management certificate in the state of Texas. The school enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year for all three campuses was comparable with an average of 1237 students. The average demographic for the STUSD represents a very diverse population such as: 36% White,

35% Hispanic, 15% African American, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, 36% economically disadvantaged, 7% English Language Learners, 5% special education and 30% at-risk. The average attendance rate for the past three years in the selected urban middle schools is 97.13% with a dropout rate of .06%.

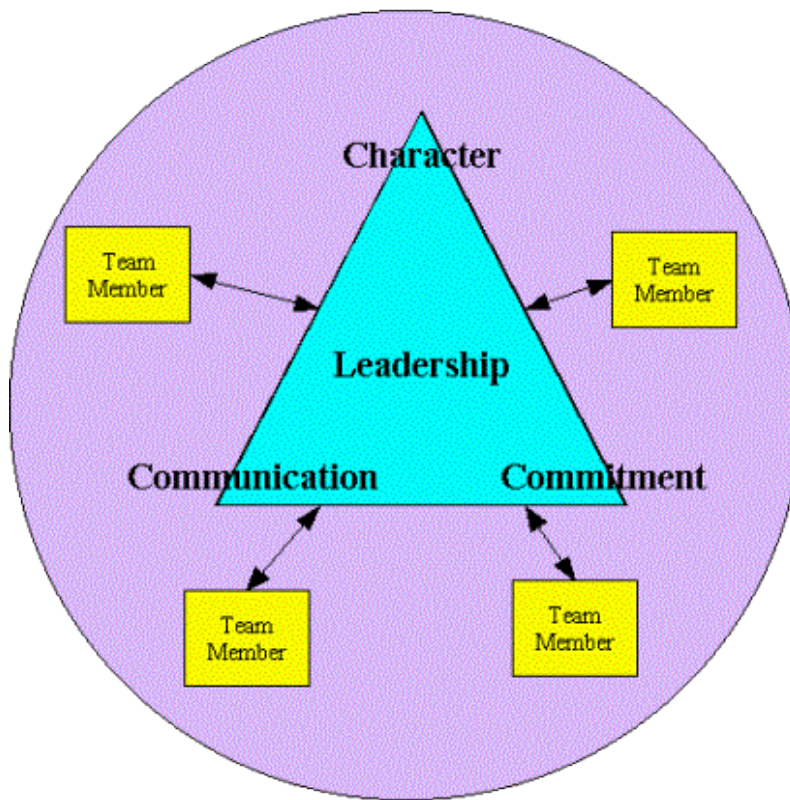
All three schools offer programs to support special education, advanced academics and multilingual student populations. Within a ten-year span, historical documents show each school had three principals. The campus leadership teams average nine members holding various positions such as: principal, assistant principal, instructional coordinator, business manager, and counselor. Any CLT members who did not meet the selected criteria was not selected to participate in the Administrator Interview Protocol; however, they did participate in the observation and noted in the selected documents.

### **Conceptual Framework**

As an interpretivist multiple site case study, this body of research started with the intent to show that campuses that implement a research based leadership framework will influence principal retention. In the beginning, a constructivist approach claimed that meanings are constructed by human beings as they participate in the world they are interpreting. It was understood that meaning is not created, but constructed. First, the researcher selected Lambert's (2002) Shared Leadership Framework because Lambert's research proved when the elements are present along with team members they can impact the effectiveness of the campus leadership team. The elements compared were team members, leadership, character, communication, communication, and commitment. Excellent communication encourages collaboration, which uncovers research that encompasses collaboration and instructional practices. Next, the research asks what impact does commitment have on a school's leadership team and makes a connection

between members, instructional practices and student achievement? Lambert (2002) further explores “Contributions and Outcomes of Effective Campus Leadership Teams. Therefore, this study examined the effectiveness of CLTs and how they influence principal retention in urban middle schools.

Figure 1 below shows the relationship components in the shared leadership framework, which identifies key elements that can influence the effectiveness of campus leadership teams.



**Figure 1. Team Model for Sharing Leadership Framework**

These elements along with team members must be present and in the shared leadership model to produce desired outcomes. The team model for shared leadership served as the organizer for the study to answer the research questions.

**Findings of research question one.** The following is the first of three research questions addressed in the study: Does the campus leadership team demonstrate characteristics of a

selected research based leadership framework? To answer research question one, questions from the Administrator Interview Protocol included numbers 13, 14, 15, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28.

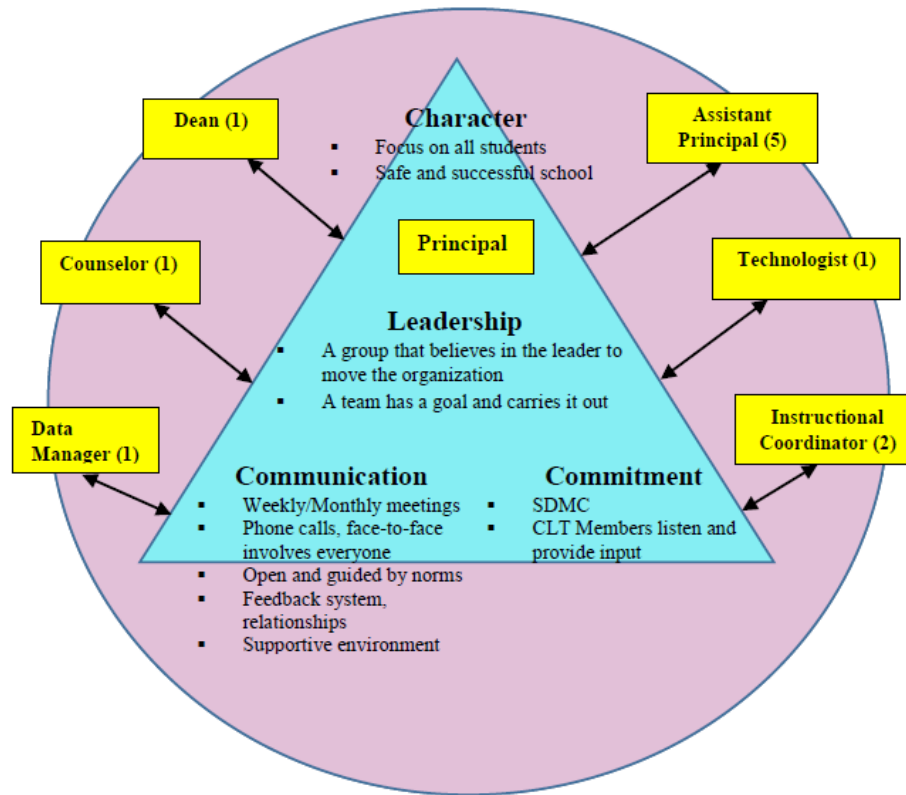
See Table 6.

**Table 6**

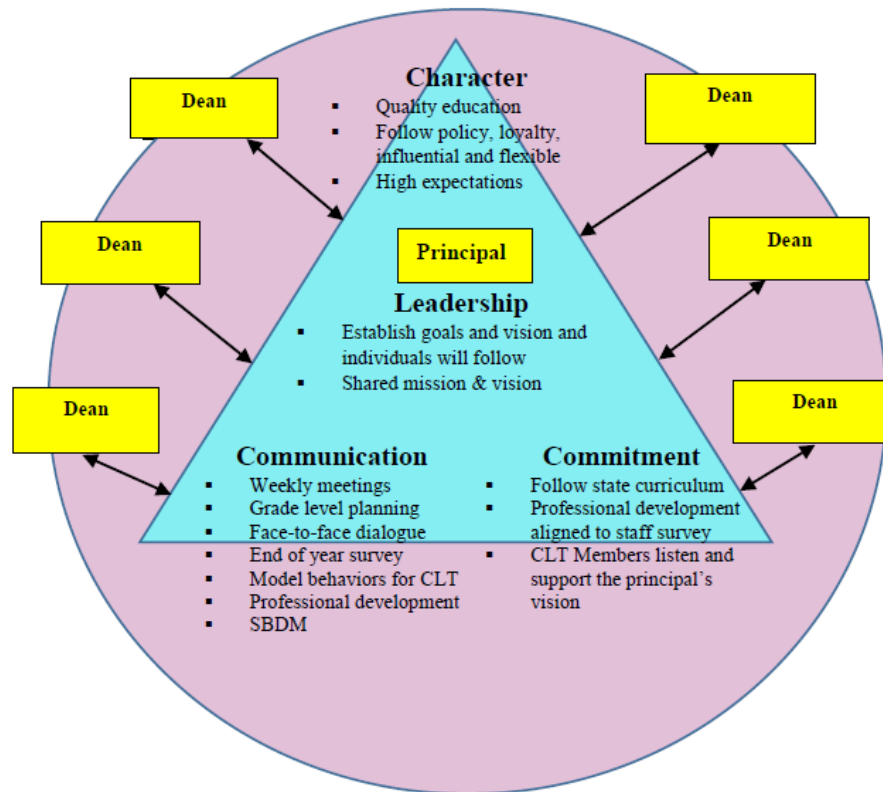
*Alignment of Research Question 1 and Interview Questions*

| Research Question One  | Interview Questions  |
|--|--|
| Does the campus leadership team demonstrate characteristics of a selected research based leadership framework? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the current make-up of the campus leadership team? (13)</li> <li>▪ What does “leadership” mean to you? (14)</li> <li>▪ Explain the vision and set of values that defines the campus leadership team. (20)</li> <li>▪ What collaborative examples can you share that are in place at your campus? (23)</li> <li>▪ How would you describe your communication system in relation to the campus leadership team? (24)</li> <li>▪ What system does your campus team have in place to accept feedback, guidance, suggestions and coaching in relation to and among campus issues? (25)</li> <li>▪ What roles have you embraced to support the campus principal? (26)</li> <li>▪ Who determines the budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development? (27)</li> <li>▪ What are some specific ways team members participate in this process? (28)</li> </ul> |

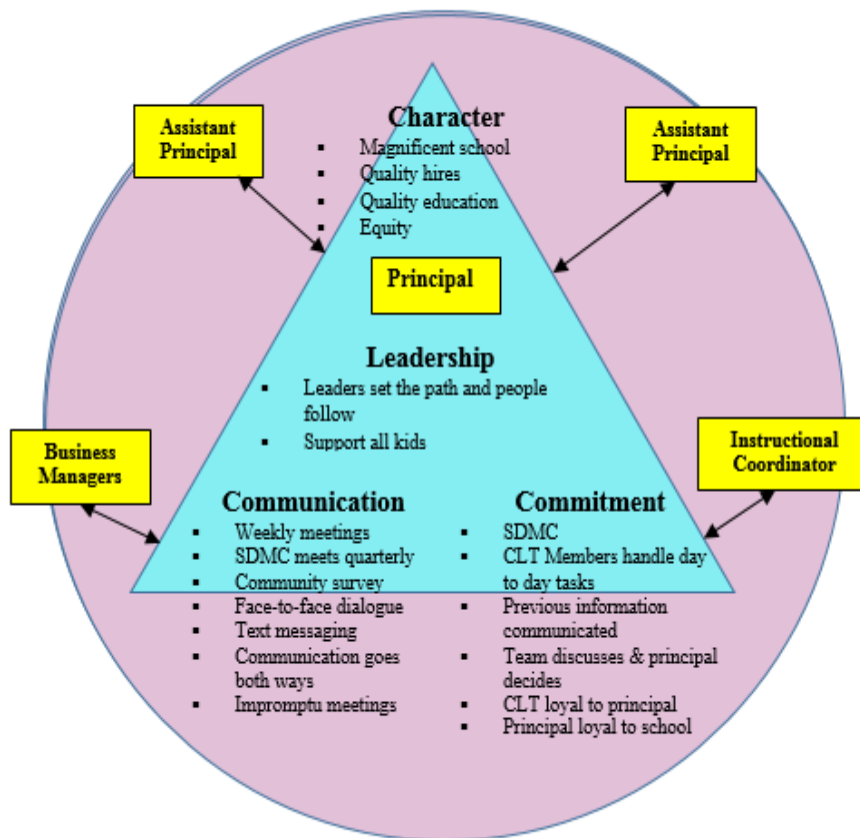
Based on the information collected, the researcher could construct a shared leadership framework for each urban middle school based on Lambert’s conceptual framework. See Figures 2, 3 and 4.



**Figure 2. Middle School A Leadership Framework**



**Figure 3. Middle School B Leadership Framework**



**Figure 4. Middle School C Leadership Framework**

According to Figures 2, 3, and 4, Middle Schools A, B, and C named specific team members which included assistant principals, deans, instructional coordinators, counselors and business managers. First, all three middle schools defined school leadership and shared the principal was the leader of the CLTs. Secondly, the participants identified characteristics such as: a focus on all students, influential, flexibility, loyalty, follow policy, quality hires and magnificent schools for kids. Next, the researcher was also able to observe face to face communication among the team members through the observations as well as obtain similar responses such as texting and emailing from the principal and team member interviews. Lastly, all members interviewed expressed commitment to the school and the CLTs by fulfilling their duties and responsibilities

assigned to them by the principal. Although responses varied, the elements identified through the Administrative Interview Protocol were corroborated by the researcher through anecdotal notes from the observations and selected documents such as organizational charts and team meeting agendas. In doing so, all five elements of Lambert's Shared Leadership Framework were present. Since all five elements are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, we must accept that campus leadership teams demonstrated characteristics of a selected research based leadership framework in Middle Schools A, B, and C.

**Findings of research question two.** The following is the second of three research questions addressed in the study: How does one perceive the principal role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams? To answer research question two, questions from the Administrative Interview Protocol included numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 21. See Table 7.

**Table 7**

***Alignment of Research Question 2 and Interview Questions***

| Research Question Two  | Interview Questions  |
|--|--|
| How does one perceive the principal role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How long have you been an administrator in public education? (5)</li> <li>▪ How long have you served in a leadership capacity on your current campus? (6)</li> <li>▪ Describe your current leadership role on your campus? (7)</li> <li>▪ What are your major responsibilities and duties? (8)</li> <li>▪ How were you selected to be a part of the Campus Leadership Team? (9)</li> <li>▪ How were the roles established and selected? (10)</li> <li>▪ How did the principal introduce the leadership team to the staff? (11)</li> <li>▪ How would you describe your role on the Campus Leadership Team? (12)</li> </ul> |



**Table 7 continued**

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the current make-up of the campus leadership team? (13)</li> <li>▪ How do you improve your leadership skills as a leadership team member? (17)</li> <li>▪ Do the leaders on your team make adjustments to organizational structures, redesign roles and distribute leadership in ways to promote greater staff engagement and ownership? (21)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Based on the responses from the Administrative Interview Protocol, the principals' roles and responsibilities included: shared decision making, coaching teachers, commitment to the school, communicating the mission and vision of the school, and acting as an agent of change. CLT Member B illustrated,

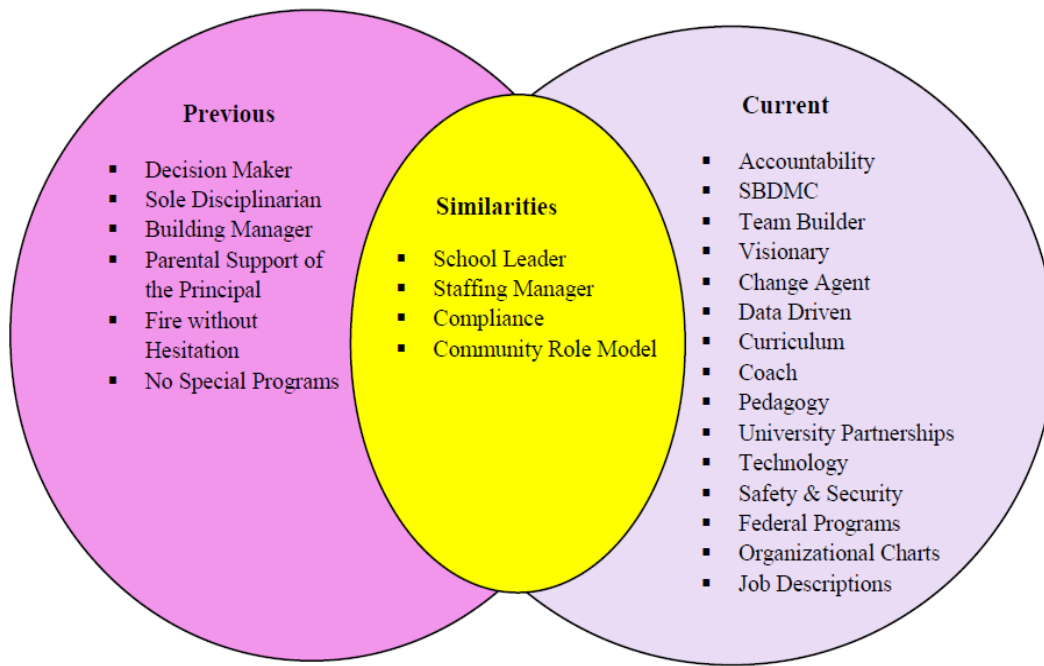
Through this [principal's] distributive leadership practice, I now have a model [See Figure 1, p. 40] I can use when I become a principal. This school would not be successful without it. It is easy to commit to the school when there are systems in place that align with our common vision. This comes from the principal leadership. Not only are we committed to the school, but we are personally committed to our principal. I am willing to do whatever she needs, and all of these roles are embraced to support her.

Since the principals had an average of three years of experience as school leaders with a total of less than three years at their current campuses, the researcher relied on Merriam's process of making meaning to identify past roles of principals in these urban schools. By combining what the researcher saw and read as well as interpreted what the participants' stated, the researcher could construct meaning of the changing role of the principal (Merriam, 2009). The historical documents selected were prior to 1990, since the law in Texas changed according to Senate Bill 1. Figure 5 shows the role of the principal prior to the Site Based Decision Making implementation. See Figure 5.



***Figure 5. Role of the Principal Prior to SBDM in Texas***

Specifically, the researcher reviewed organizational charts, job descriptions, principal appraisal/evaluation systems from the Texas Education Agency and urban school district, SDMC minutes, the mission, vision and strategic goals of the district, the professional learning community structure of the district, collaborative models, and documented technological advancements. The researcher further depended on the evidence provided by the participants to describe the current role of the principal and then look for what was missing in the historical documents. In doing so, the researcher discovered that the role of the principal was summarized as: a disciplinarian, supported by parents without question, a lack of oversight for special education programs, building managers and served as a community role model. None of these characteristics were mentioned during the interviews or the observations. See Figure 6.



**Figure 6. The Changing Role of the Principal**

By comparing the Team Model for Shared Leadership Framework in Figure 1 to the Role of the Principal Prior to SBDM in Texas in Figure 5, one can perceive the principal role has changed in relation to the CLT. Specifically, only the leadership element is identified in the Shared Leadership Framework in Middle Schools A, B, and C prior to the implementation of the SBDM. See Figure 5 on page 120. Whereas, all elements are identified in the conceptual models of Middle Schools A, B, and C after the implementation of the SBDM. See Figures 2, 3, and 4 on pages 115, 116 and 117. Based on the research, one may not only perceive the role of the CLT changed, but also the role of the leader shifted from isolation to inclusion.

**Findings of research question three.** The following is the last of three research questions addressed in the study: How and to what extent does the structure and process of a campus leadership team influence principal retention? To answer research question three, questions from the Administrator Interview Protocol included numbers 16, 18, 19, 22, 29 and 30. See Table 8.

**Table 8**

***Alignment of Research Question 3 and Interview Questions***

| <b>Research Question Three</b>   | <b>Interview Questions</b>   |
|--|--|
| How and to what extent does the structure and process of a campus leadership team influence principal retention? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Do you feel your role on the CLT is vital in reducing team member and principal turnover? (30)</li><li>▪ Is your team a cohesive unit or do individuals work in isolation? (16)</li><li>▪ Are leadership responsibilities distributed equitably across the team? How do you assist the school principal with leadership responsibilities? (18)</li><li>▪ Is there a system for building leadership capacity to sustain the campus system? (19)</li><li>▪ How is trust established among the members of your campus leadership team? (22)</li><li>▪ How long have you been committed to the role you serve of the CLT? (29)</li></ul> |

Based on the responses from the interviews and observable data, all participants agreed:

1. The principal is vital to the CLT.
2. The teams are mostly cohesive except for one team member at School B.
3. Leadership responsibilities are equitable although varied by the principal.
4. Systems are in place for sustainability.
5. Trust is established, and
6. Commitment by the participants was present.

Principal A shared,

principals should feel supported by a team, and hire effective folks to assist him or her in their role. One principal cannot do this alone, and I feel strongly that support by a CLT is vital to my longevity and success on this campus.

CLT Member A was thankful that her principal allowed her an opportunity to engage in different pieces. She stated,

not only am I a member of the CLT, but I also serve on the PTO and SDMC. I have a lot of input at our school, because my principal supports me and values my feedback. After three years of being here, I know our CLT is vital to reducing team member and principal turnover. We all stick together.

Principal B shared that she is very committed to the campus as the principal. She stressed the importance of everyone being on the same page, and stated the principal is vital to reduce CLT member and principal burnout. Throughout the study, the researcher identified the CLT at Middle School B had minor differences from Schools A and C. For example, Principal B revealed one team member had a different value system and characteristics which contrasted with the other team members in all three schools, and the push back this CLT Member gave Principal B during the meeting was noticed by the researcher. Principal B explained,

our campus team is a cohesive team that works closely together. However, there is one team member that isolated herself when I was hired. She did not buy into my vision and own the work. This created a weak link on the team and caused a lot of work on my part for extra coaching, etc. I am just not sure she had the same level of commitment as everyone else. A principal can usually handle one team member like this, but if you get a whole team against you it would make me want to explore other options.

CLT Member B shared, “My role is absolutely vital, because if we are not doing our job the principal and team members have to pick up the slack. This burns everyone out of the job.”

Principal C admitted her role is vital to protect the sustainability of the school. She spent the entire year modeling, coaching and developing the leadership team. Further, she supported teachers, parents, students, and felt she was the glue that held the team together.

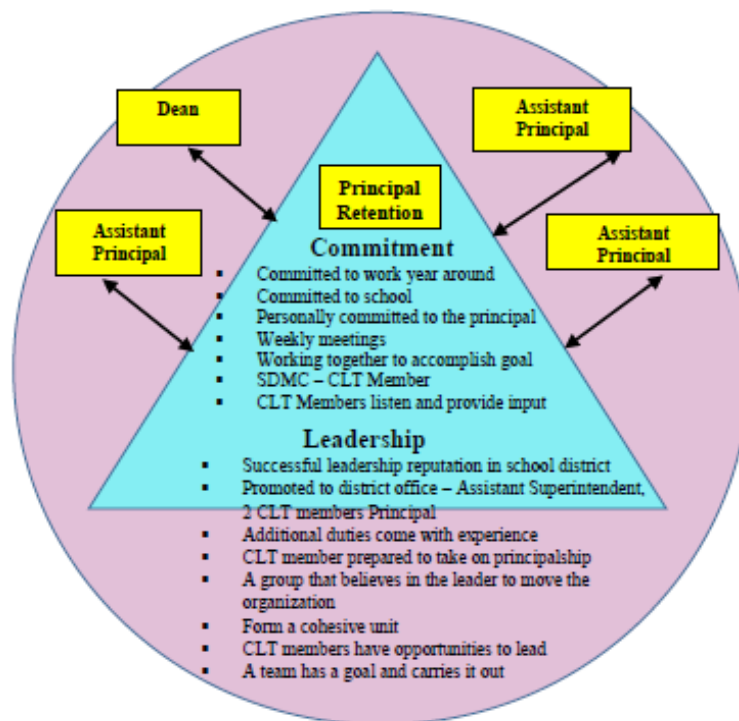
My main goal is putting systems in place where all kids get a quality education.

Everyone now knows what we expect from kids, what teachers are to expect from them, and we have seen a twenty-five percent increase in closing the achievement gap in subgroups. I also must make sure that the teachers are just as committed to that work as I am. (Principal C, 2017).

CLT Member C described his commitment by sharing,

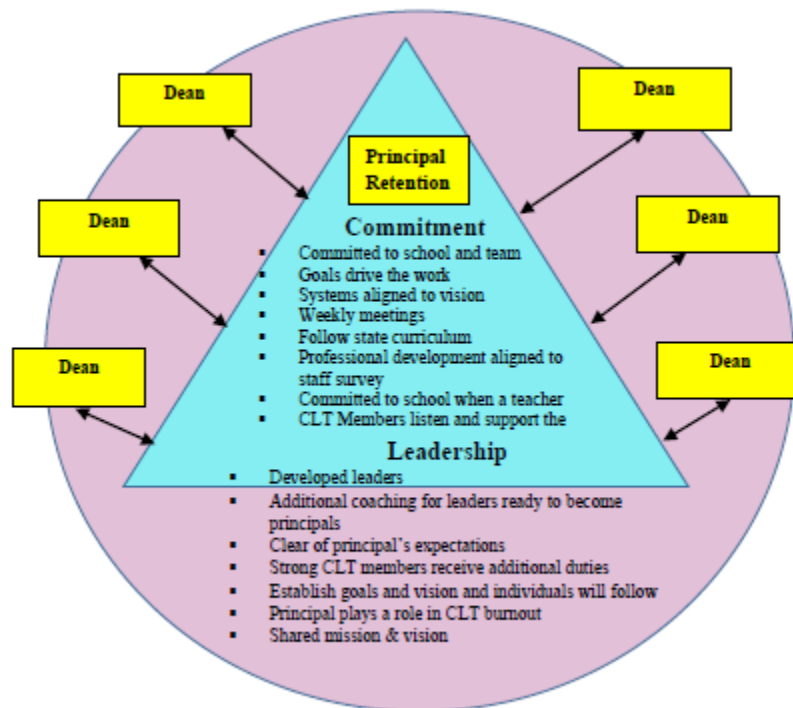
I am not having flirtations to work somewhere else. I am very loyal and committed to this place and my principal. I know there is a different stop down the road for each of us and to a certain extent we are working to support each other. However, this is going to be a very different place when our principal leaves; I just don't know if I would want to be here, if that were the case.

Furthermore, the follow up questions corroborated with the interviews and observations allowed the researcher to construct a shared leadership framework for principals and aspiring principals for each urban middle school. Based on Lambert's conceptual framework, figures 7, 8, and 9 focuses specifically on the influence the structure CLTs have on principal retention. See Figures 7, 8 and 9.



**Figure 7. Middle School A Leadership Framework – Principal Retention**

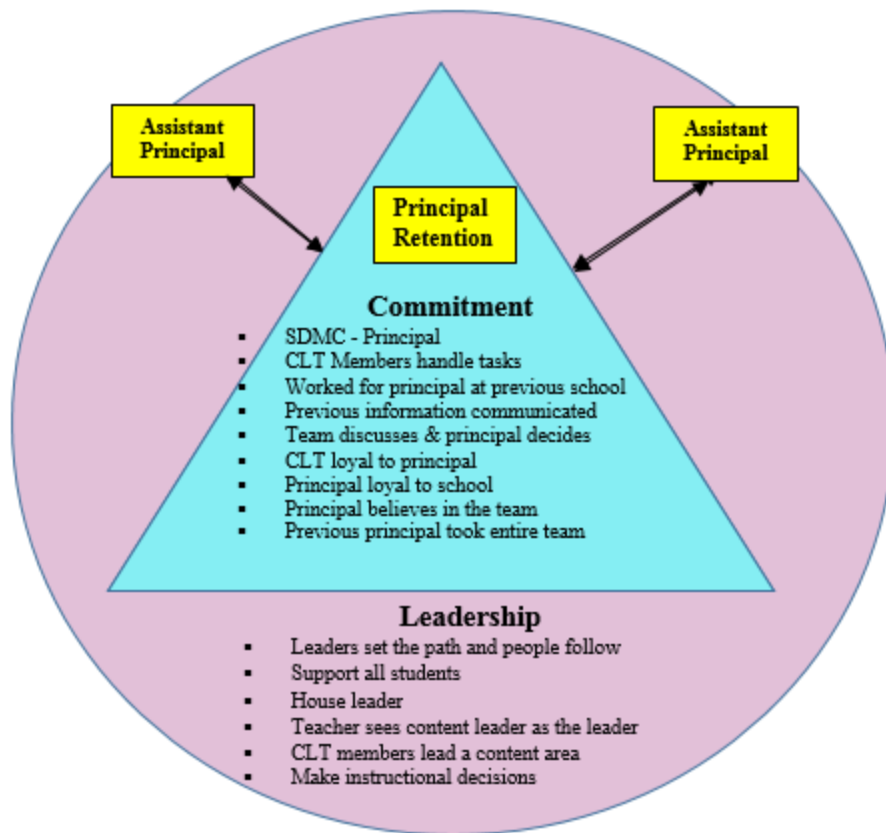
In Middle School A, two elements emerged within the structure of the CLT Shared Leadership Framework – Principal Retention Model. Consistently within the Administrator Interview Protocol, the observation and follow up questions, and the historical documents, the administrators showed a commitment to the work, the school and the principal. Also, leadership was a consistent theme among the administrative team which included: successful leaders from previous schools, leaders who received promotions, additional duties assigned with leadership success and experiences, a group that believes a leader can move the organization, the development of a cohesive unit aligned with the requirements of SBDM state and local policy, many opportunities to lead, and the team has a goal and moves the agenda forward. A self-report of the administrative team revealed they felt prepared to take on leadership positions and remain within the district.



**Figure 8. Middle School B Leadership Framework – Principal Retention**

In Middle School B, two elements emerged within the structure of the CLT Shared Leadership Framework – Principal Retention Model. Consistently within the Administrator Interview Protocol, the observation and follow up questions, and the historical documents, the administrators showed a commitment to the school and team, the goals that drive the work, and the united belief that systems must align to the vision. Administrators were committed to the school when they were teachers, and take the commitment with them as they move into leadership positions. Also, leadership was a consistent theme among the administrative team which included: developed leaders, additional coaching for leaders ready to become principals, clear expectations, and strong CLT members with leadership initiatives received additional leadership responsibilities.





**Figure 9. Middle School C Leadership Framework – Principal Retention**

In Middle School C, two elements emerged within the structure of the CLT Shared Leadership Framework – Principal Retention Model. Consistently within the Administrator Interview Protocol, the observation and follow up questions, and the historical documents, the administrators showed a commitment to the SDMC and strong loyalty to the principal and the school. Also, leadership was a consistent theme among the administrative team which included: a belief that leaders set the path and people follow, instructional leaders model for teachers in content areas, and teachers exhibit positive perceptions of the leaders.

According to Figures 7, 8 and 9, Middle School A, B, and C included specific team members that participated in the interview, observation and follow-up questions after the observation to obtain information regarding previous principals. First, all three middle schools

were committed to the leader and the school when they entered the position. Secondly, the participants identified commitment qualities such as: teams meeting weekly, personal commitment to the principal, provide campus professional development aligned to staff survey, principal believes in the team and members of the team follow the principal were identified by the researcher. When the principals transitioned to a new position CLT members joined the principal if positions were provided. The leadership qualities entailed: successful leadership reputation in the school district, countless leaders receive promotions, believing the leader to move the organization, CLT members leading a content area, and make instructional decision. Lastly, all historical documents, interviews and observations revealed that principals are committed to schools, staff and the school district. Leaders with the appropriate team follow the principal when positions lend themselves. The effective principals remain in the district, but in a higher-level capacity such as an assistant superintendent. Although responses varied, two of the five elements, leadership and commitment, from Lambert's Share Leadership Framework surfaced. The research also revealed that principals are retained within the district, but not necessarily at the school.

In summation, the data revealed a need for a structured CLT as well as identified processes for selecting, introducing and training team members, modeling leadership, displaying characteristics aligned with a school's vision, communicating effectively with one another, and committing to the work and teams. In fact, principals and CLT members simultaneously described the interdependence of the team member and the principal with commitment and leadership at the forefront of remaining on the campus. If these two elements are present, then principals and aspiring principals remain within the district. Therefore, one can conclude that not only does the structure and process of a CLT influence principal retention, but also the

structure and process of a CLT retains successful principals within a district to serve in higher level leadership positions.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Practice**

This study cannot fully address all influences on principal retention in urban middle schools. It is important to address additional inquiries as well as areas for additional research. According to the literature, urban school districts continue to have difficulty retaining school leaders. The development of leaders requires a deliberate approach to building human capital development and team unity (Abbott & Bush, 2013). Therefore, school districts must recognize that campus leadership teams can reduce the costs of replacing staff, maintain the stability of the school systems and staff, and in turn impact student achievement. As a result, it is critical for school district leaders to study characteristics of research based leadership frameworks, perceptions of the principal's role and how this role has changed in relation to CLTs, and the structure and process of a CLT and its influence on principal retention. Once a school district identifies the influence CLTS have in urban middle schools, these districts can start to make decisions on principal professional development aligned to the schools' campus improvement plans and goals. Once the alignment occurs, principals and their CLT members may remain on the job longer.

Since we know that CLTs influence principal retention, superintendents should embed the Shared Leadership Framework model as part of an urban school districts' common practices. Specifically, principals and site based decision making committees should be given budgets to support the hiring of team members and the backing for training principals and team members on elements within the framework.

Lastly, urban school districts should define expectations for beginning principals and provide support on how to incorporate CLTs in action on a campus. School district leaders must recognize that although the role of the principal has shifted, school districts' structures and organization may not have shifted at the same time creating a disconnect between school and district leaders.

While outside the scope of this study, there is a high degree of confidence that the exact same study can be replicated for urban elementary and high school principals. The information gained from this type of study gives districts consistency across all levels.

### **Recommendations for Research**

There are many studies examining principal retention; however, few studies link campus leadership teams to this topic. Although Principals A, B, and C had all five elements present of the Shared Leadership Framework, it is important to note that the principals had never seen Lambert's conceptual model [Figure 1, p. 40] prior to the interviews. As CLTs become the norm for school principals, shared leadership frameworks could be applied in various settings to determine further insights and applications.

Further research could include (a) the influence of CLTs on academic achievement, (b) the influence of CLTs on teacher retention, and (c) the influence of CLTs on effective staff communication and commitment.

### **Summary**

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of Campus Leadership Teams in urban middle schools when compared to the Shared Leadership Framework model. Additionally, the researcher asked: do characteristics of successful CLTs alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention? The researcher interviewed participants using the Administrator

Interview Protocol, conducted observations of Campus Leadership Teams and reviewed selected campus and school district documents. The participants in this multiple site case study provided rich descriptions of their experiences as CLT leaders and team members, which led the researcher to conclude:

1. Campus Leadership Teams demonstrate characteristics of a selected research based framework when all five elements of Lambert's conceptual model are present.
2. The perception of the role of the CLT changed after the implementation of SBDM in Texas, and the role of the leader shifted from isolation to inclusion.
3. CLT members and principals are interdependent.
4. CLT members were committed to the leader.
5. The structure and process of a CLT influence principal retention.

Since it was not known how the principal perceived change in relation to CLTs and to what extent CLTs demonstrated characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework, the study will benefit urban district superintendents who are responsible for principal hires. This research will also provide a shared leadership model for principals in urban middle schools, provide case studies to principals and superintendents to model effective and ineffective practices, and provide research to urban districts to preserve principals.

## **Appendix A**

### **Administrator Interview Protocol**

#### **Introduction**

1. Introduce myself covering employment history, years of experience with organization and current position help.
2. Explain my role as a researcher.
3. I am interested in how CLTs influence principal retention in urban middle schools. As the researcher I want to be able to draw comparisons of principals and their CLTs while predicting comparable results across the studies or contrasting outcomes in relation to one another and the Shared Leadership Framework. In my study, I want to answer the primary questions:
  - How and to what extent does the implementation of a Campus Leadership Team influence principal retention?
  - How does the principal perceive the role has changed in relation to campus leadership teams?
  - To what extent does the Campus Leadership Team demonstrate characteristics of the Shared Leadership Framework?
4. I will be asking a series of questions to help me gather information to determine if a campus leadership team influences principal retention in relation to the shared leadership framework. I will record our interview in order to have accurate transcription. You will be provided a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy.

#### **Participant Profile**

5. How long have you been an administrator in public education?
6. How long have you served in a leadership capacity on your current campus?
7. Describe your current leadership role on your campus?
8. What are your major responsibilities and duties?

#### **Section 1 – Team Members**

9. How were you selected to be a part of the Campus Leadership Team?
10. How were the roles established and selected?
11. How did the principal introduce the leadership team to the staff?
12. How would you describe your role on the Campus Leadership Team?
13. What is the current make-up of the campus leadership team?

#### **Section 2 – Leadership**

14. What does “leadership” mean to you?
15. Does your leadership function match your definition of leadership?
16. Is your team a cohesive unit or do individuals work in isolation?
17. How do you develop as a leadership team member?
18. Are leadership responsibilities distributed equitably across the team? How do you assist the school principal with leadership responsibilities?
19. Is there a system for building leadership capacity to sustain the campus system?

**Section 3 – Character**

20. Explain the vision and set of values that defines the campus leadership team.
21. Do the leaders on your team make adjustments to organizational structures, redesign roles and distribute leadership in ways to promote greater staff engagement and ownership?
22. How is trust established among the members of your campus leadership team?

**Section 4 – Collaborative Communication**

23. What collaborative examples can you share that are in place at your campus?
24. How would you describe your communication system in relation to the campus leadership team?
25. What system does your campus team have in place to accept feedback, guidance, suggestions and coaching in relation to and among campus issues?
26. What roles have you embraced to support the campus principal?

**Section 5 – Commitment**

27. Who determines the budget, staffing, curriculum, planning, school organization and staff development?
28. What are some specific ways team members participate in this process?
29. How long have you been committed to the role you serve of the CLT?
30. Do you feel your role on the CLT is vital in reducing team member and principal turnover?

## **Appendix B**

IRB USE ONLY

Study Number: 2017-05-0116

Approval Date: 06/02/2017

Expires: 06/01/2020

Name of Funding Agency (if applicable): NA

### **Consent for Participation in Research**

**Title:** A Case Study Examining the Influence of Campus Leadership Teams on Principal Retention in Urban Middle Schools

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will answer any of your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

You have been asked to participate in a research study about the influence of campus leadership teams on principal retention. The purpose of the proposed case study is to examine the effectiveness of campus leadership teams in urban middle schools when compared to the shared leadership framework model. Additionally, do characteristics of a successful campus leadership teams alleviate principals' burdens and influence principal retention?

#### **What will you be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an interview
- Participate in a Campus Leadership Team meeting for observation
- Review transcribed data from the interview

This study will take place in one face-to-face, phone, or interactive video interviews of approximately 30-minutes in length. The observation will include 1 Campus Leadership Team meeting per campus. The study will include up to 9 study participants.

Your participation will be audio recorded.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, findings may be used to inform superintendents in hiring principals and providing professional development on best leadership practices such as campus leadership teams.

#### **Do you have to participate?**



No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all, or if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin (University) in anyway.

If you would like to participate, please provide a verbal consent to the researcher. You will receive a copy of this form.

**Will there be any compensation?**

You will not receive any type of payment participating in this study.

**How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you participate in this research study?**

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your data will be protected by the researcher referring to you with a neutral alias, not disclosing any information you share to other participants, ensuring the details of the data cannot be traced to participants, and all data will be locked in a secure location.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your data will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data, which will be masked, resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for 2 years and then erased.

**Whom to contact with questions about the study?**

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher **Felicia Adams** at **281-389-1812** or send an email to **fadams224@utexas.edu** for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is [2017-05-0116].

**Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?**

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at **orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu**.

**Participation**

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

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## **Vita**

Felicia Adams became principal of Lanier Middle School in August 2014. Walking into a high-performing middle school, Mrs. Adams embraced the role of visionary and cultivated a leadership team to meet the specific needs of the campus. With a laser-like focus on the underperforming populations and a vision of “Equity for All”, she championed the team to effectively support both teachers and students. Grounded in a shared belief system, collaboration, and a culture of trust, teachers could see immediate gains in student achievement by utilizing data to drive instructional practices.

In one year, the percentage of students at Lanier Middle School performing at the advanced level jumped from 55 to 61 percent in reading, 41 to 55 percent in math, 42 to 47 percent in science and 37 to 43 percent in social studies. Lanier exceeded all target scores showing improvement in all areas. Index 1 increased from 94 to 96, Index 2 increased from 47 to 57, Index 3 increased from 55 to 65 and Index 4 went from 78 to 82. The double-digit gain in closing the performance gap and student progress is a true testament that the needs of all students are being met. Additionally, Lanier Middle School made double-digit gains with EVAAS while also earning all seven TEA state distinction designations. In addition to earning all distinction designation, Lanier appeared in the top quartile and ranked number one to all comparison schools. Lanier has received recognition in the press as a leader in student achievement for consistently demonstrating prominent levels of student achievement, improvement in achievement over time and reduction in the achievement gap. In 2015 Lanier was named a Texas Honor Roll School. Lanier MS also took a leap the Children at Risk ranking from number twelve in the state to number three. Adams was honored to be named the HISD 2016 Secondary Principal of the Year.



Mrs. Adams landed her first principal position nine years ago at Lockhart Elementary, where the student population was 87 percent economically disadvantaged. Enrollment spiked from 492 students to 700 students; evidence to the school's growing reputation. When she accepted the position as principal of Lockhart Elementary, only 27 percent of the students were on grade-level in reading and 37 percent were on grade-level in math. In one year, scores jumped to 59 percent in reading and 62 percent in math, and Lockhart was rated an Exemplary school. Under the new rating system, Lockhart earned distinctions in both reading and math, and top 25 percent in closing the achievement gap. Principal Adams was a recipient of the HEB Excellence in Education Award in 2014.

Felicia Adams graduated from Louisiana State University and taught various grades at the elementary level in Houston ISD. After earning a Master's Degree from Texas Southern University, Mrs. Adams accepted her first leadership role outside of the classroom, allowing her to support teachers and administrators at the school level. Having the opportunity to lead when Houston ISD launched the Balanced Approach to Reading Initiative was an experience that led her to greater leadership opportunities from Instructional Supervisor to Lead Supervisor, and then Reading Manager for one of the largest school districts. With the implementation of one of the largest Reading First programs across the nation, Mrs. Adams helped to leverage support across the district in monumental ways. The success she experienced in Houston ISD provided Mrs. Adams with the opportunity to be named as the keynote speaker at the State Reading First Conference, which connected her with other states regarding Reading First. Although Mrs. Adams experienced great success as Houston ISD Reading Manager, campus experience was needed to enhance her leadership capabilities.

Mrs. Adams is currently enrolled in the Cooperative Superintendent Program at the University of Texas as a doctoral student. She is in her 22nd year in education. In her time outside of public education, Mrs. Adams enjoys spending time with her three-year old son and husband, doing almost anything entertaining, and watching sports.